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THE BISON

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Searcy, Ark., 72149

NEWS 2A
OPINIONS 3&4A
SPORTS 1&2B
FEATURES 3B
LIFESTYLE 4B

The Bison's **DECLASSIFIED** POST-GRAD SURVIVAL GUIDE

GUIDE TO: *Life After Harding*

Special Edition

Editor's Note

Graduation is monumental, and it often comes with mixed feelings of excitement and anxiety. The Bison staff has accumulated resources and advice from students, faculty and alumni to help ease the transition for students leaving Harding, this year or years to come.

(Results May Vary)

In This Issue:

- Navigating Job Offers, 1C
- What it Means to be an Alumni, 3C
- Searching for Housing, 4C

Photo illustration by DARRIAN BAGLEY AND EMILY GRIFFIN

The elephant in the classroom: student debt

BISON STAFF

Freshman Marti Pike applied for student loans in order to attend Harding. She said she understands that loans are a big responsibility, but that the benefits of her decision outweigh the risks.

"At the end of the day, if I didn't go into debt, I wouldn't be in college," Pike said. "I want to be a doctor, and I know I need a degree to do that. That will make the money back and also give me the opportunity to do something that I love."

Graduate Financial Aid Director Renee Bissell said students often allow their parents to take control of their loans while in school, which often leads to post-graduation panic.

"When you just let mom and dad figure it out, and you don't really know what this means, that's a dangerous thing," Bissell said. "You need to know what this debt means for your future."

Over half of Americans ages 18 to 29 have outstanding student loan debt, according to the Pew Research Center. At the end of June 2017, Americans owed more than \$1.3 trillion in student loans. For many students, paying outright for a college education simply is not an option. Still, enrollment in four-year institutions continues to rise, according to the National Center for Education Statistics.

Bissell emphasized the importance of keeping a budget during school and after graduation.

"It's very helpful to have an understanding of how money works and how debt works. I don't think that students understand what the word 'debt' really means," Bissell said. "They don't seem to catch it until they get out of school, and they have to make their first payment. Then they're scared to death."

To better prepare for the future, Bissell said, immediately educating oneself about debt is essential.

"The biggest mistake students make is not being educated. People bury their heads in the sand," Bissell said. "If you don't pay attention, you can take on more debt than you need."

Financial Aid Counselor Rigel Page encourages students to keep track of the loans they take on and look into payment options while they are still in school.

"Don't borrow more than you have to," Page said. "Know what your loans are. Sit down and look at how much you're going to make and how much you can pay."

According to studentloans.gov, understanding the difference between direct subsidized and direct unsubsidized loans is crucial. Direct subsidized loans, also known as Stafford Loans, accrue interest throughout college, which the U.S. Department of Education pays. Direct unsubsidized loans, also known as Direct Stafford Loans, are available to undergraduate students as well; however, students must repay all interest on this loan. Loan servicers provide a variety of payment options such as date-specific payments, plans customized to one's income and loan consolidation, which combines loans into one monthly payment with a single servicer.

Page urged students to contact their lender with questions about repayment and consolidation of their loans, noting that students should think twice before deciding to consolidate.

"You can only consolidate one time," Page said. "People think that if they consolidate to make one payment, it'll be easier. Then something happens, and they can't do that anymore because they've already done it. Wait to consolidate until you really need to. Most of the time, it's not a benefit."

The problem compounds when students pursue graduate school. Graduate schools usually allow students to take on larger loans, which can make repayment more difficult in the future, according to Bissell. A graduate student should be extremely careful about what they spend, especially if they are already living entirely on loans.

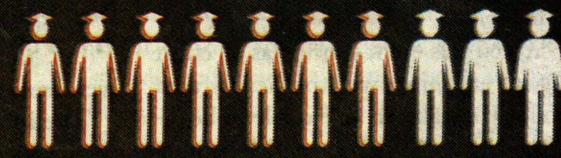
"Don't go buy a new car and expect to pay for it with loans," Bissell said. "Think about even your everyday life. A \$5 cup of coffee is not a \$5 cup of coffee, it's that cup of coffee times the interest that's accruing on it for the next four years."

Students should also take note of loan forgiveness programs, such as the public service loan forgiveness program and the teacher loan forgiveness program. Students employed at governmental organizations or non-profit tax-exempt organizations may qualify for public service forgiveness programs.

Alumna Audrian Harville, a fourth grade teacher at Landmark Elementary School in Little Rock, qualified for teacher loan forgiveness. Students in education programs can qualify for the TEACH grant, a loan forgiveness program that offers up to \$4,000 a year to teachers who work in high need fields of low-income schools for four years after graduating.

SEE DEBT, 1C

NATIONAL STATISTICS



70% OF STUDENTS ARE LOAN BORROWERS

AVERAGE TIME TO PAY

**10-25
YEARS**



AVERAGE MONTHLY
STUDENT LOAN
PAYMENT

= \$351

THE AVERAGE STUDENT LOAN
BORROWER GRADUATES WITH

**\$ 30,100
IN DEBT**

INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE STUDENT LOAN
REPORT, CONSUMERFINANCE.GOV, CITIZENS
FINANCIAL GROUP, THE COLLEGE BOARD,
THE INSTITUTE FOR COLLEGE ACCESS & SUCCESS

Graphic by SAWYER HITE

HARDING STATISTICS

95%

of Harding students receive financial
aid (loans, grants, work study)

average student loans
accumulated in four
years:

APPROXIMATELY
\$29,000

MORE THAN

\$60 MIL.

of financial aid
processed
last year
number of undergraduate students who
receive federal student loans:

APPROXIMATELY
56%

Information accumulated from Harding Office of Financial Aid, College Factual and the National Center for Education Statistics

Harding wins at Governor's Cup Competition

SHELBI BRIDGES
student writer

Three teams from Harding competed in the Arkansas Governor's Cup competition final on Friday, March 30. The annual competition involves individuals and groups who compete using their created business plans, products and services. The top six teams proceed to the final round, and the top three winners receive monetary prizes up to \$25,000. This year, Harding's winners included Team Monity, who received third place in the undergraduate division, and Team TiFix, the undergraduate team winner of the innovation division.

Students begin planning their projects long before the competition begins. Junior Brandon Gomez, a member of a finalist team, participated in the competition for the second time this year. Gomez said the competition can become "life-consuming," and that it takes an extreme amount of preparation. Gomez took classes over the summer to prepare for the competition and began developing a business plan with his team in August 2017.

"What I really appreciated this year was the team of engineers that we worked with," Gomez said. "The attitude and the mindset that they brought to this competition really encouraged me to want to try to push harder. Initially, I was just going to be kind of an advisor role, but I was quickly enthralled

with the work that we were doing."

Gomez added that the teams that usually do the best are made of students with many different majors. Junior Clara Hartman, also a member of a team that made it to the final round, agreed. Hartman said the competition includes a variety of students, not just business majors.

"Honestly, you could have a Communication Sciences and Disorders major on your team if you're doing a CSD product," Hartman said.

Hartman plans to start her own business after graduation and said she hopes to use the business model her team developed for the Governor's Cup in her future career. Hartman acted as the CEO of the business her team developed for the competition. She said the experience taught her how to be a leader and an entrepreneur.

"It's an amazing growing experience," Hartman said.

In addition to the student winners, Director of the Waldron Center for Entrepreneurship and Family Business and associate professor Dr. Kenneth Olree won the C. Sam Walls Entrepreneur Educator Award. According to the Governor's Cup website, Olree received the award because of his contributions in furthering entrepreneur education on Harding's campus.

Olree credited Harding's success at the competition to the work ethic and enthusiasm of the students and faculty involved.



Courtesy of **BRANDON GOMEZ**

Seniors Michael Ann Priddy-Arrington, Andrew Sweatt, Lucas Goodspeed, Connor Botes, Kelsea Hall and junior Brandon Gomez pose at competition. Their team competed in the Arkansas Governor's Cup final on March 30.

"Not only do we have good student interdisciplinary work, but our faculty from these different areas are supportive of their students coming together to make a viable business plan and contribute to the teams' successes," Olree said.

Olree said the competition can largely benefit students who plan to start their own business, as it offers real experience that

students can apply in their futures careers. While he appreciates the monetary prizes awarded, he said his overall goal is to see students succeed.

"I want to see students start real businesses," Olree said. "I'd love to see students graduate and not worry about 'who am I going to work for?' I'd rather them worry about 'who am I going to hire?'"

Searcy participates in Big Bloomin' Weekend

JACOB BROYLES
student writer

Searcy will participate in the first ever "Big Bloomin' Weekend," set to take place this Earth Day weekend, from April 21-22.

According to Searcy.com, events will include gardening lectures and a plant sale hosted by White County Master Gardeners at the Carmichael Community Center. Plants will be on sale on tomorrow, April 21 from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Lectures will be conducted by White County Extension agent Sherri Wood and White County Master Gardeners Ann Wood and Bobbie Sandlin. The lectures will take place in the morning.

The event is meant to encourage the community, its citizens and its businesses to participate in beautification efforts for the city of Searcy. The event was created by president and chief idea officer of Think Idea Studio, Mat Faulkner.

"I created this event concept as an effort to engage and empower the Searcy area community to take an active role in beautification efforts," Faulkner said. "Planting flowers is an easy and fun activity with a low cost. The concept is more about a community campaign to inform and inspire others to get involved and make a visible improvement all



RYANN HEIM | The Bison

"Big Bloomin' Weekend," a beautification project taking place during Earth Day weekend in Searcy, aims to encourage citizens to take an active role in the city's curb appeal.

over the city."

The idea was inspired after Faulkner observed Think Idea's storefront. He realized they needed to plant some flowers to improve their curb-appeal, especially since the weather was warming up. He decided to make it a community-wide event and pitched the idea

to other Searcy organizations.

As head of the Greenkeepers Garden Club, Liz Howell, vice president for alumni and parent relations, will be representing Harding University in the event and serves on the board of National Garden Clubs. Howell has a love of gardening, and also realizes the

impact "Big Bloomin' Weekend" could have on the community.

"The event is important because it creates awareness of how important it is to support the environment of our community," Howell said. "It also gets people involved in something that benefits others and encourages other people to come and look at Searcy. By visiting Searcy, they will be able to see what a wonderful city we have."

Parks and Recreation Director Mike Parsons has also been involved in the preparation for the event. He sees the event not only as a way to beautify Searcy, but also to bring the community together.

"There are different ways of doing that," Parsons said. "This event is going to make you interact with other people. It's not like you're just going to go rake someone's garden and leave. You're going to have to get your hands dirty and interact with people you may have never seen before or you may not ever see again."

All Harding students and community residents are welcomed to participate in the event. Plants will be on sale at both the Carmichael Community Center and Searcy Farmer's Market. Those participating in the event are encouraged to share their experiences on social media using #BigBloominWeekend.

International Programs offers scholarship opportunities

NATALIE SMITH
head web editor

In fall 2018, the Office of International Programs will send its first round of students around the world with benefits from a new scholarship program. The program will enable students to attend programs at one of Harding's seven international campuses at a discounted price.

Jeff Hopper, dean of International Programs, said the decision to offer scholarships was made because all Harding students should have the opportunity to attend one of the programs, regardless of their financial status.

The majority of funds for the new scholarship program are allocated for supplemental scholarships to enable more students to participate in the university's seven full-semester international studies experiences.

"We know the cost of education is high in general and recognize the additional cost to attend an international program," Hopper said.

Nearly 40 percent of students study abroad in an international studies experience during their time at the university. The Office of International Programs said they hope this new program will enable even more students to

study abroad.

"I hope that 30 or more additional students a year will be able to study abroad because of these scholarships," Hopper said. "We believe in the importance of a global education and are excited that more students will now have the opportunity to experience Harding's international programs."

Sophomore Ryann Heim is a student worker in the International Programs Office and has recently traveled abroad on Harding's Australasia (HUA) trip. Heim said studying abroad changed her life.

"Studying abroad changes your perspective about the world and your future," Heim said. "The world is smaller and more attainable than I thought."

Heim said she is excited for students to have the opportunity to receive scholarships to travel abroad.

"Studying abroad is already worth much more than you pay, and so more people having access to international programs is exciting," Heim said. "Everyone should have the opportunity to travel."

According to the Office of International Programs, the scholarships were made possible through the generosity of several key donors, including significant contributions

from Kevin and Laura Uebelein, Michael and Marylyn McGuire, Nancy O'Brien and Fred and Alice Jewell. The first fundraising cycle was completed in December 2017 and will continue on an ongoing basis to ensure funding for future years.

The funds will be awarded by a financial adviser based solely on student need.

Harding offers seven semester-long study abroad programs in Australasia, Chile, England, Greece, France, Italy and Zambia, as well as numerous other short-term study abroad opportunities.

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**BEYOND
THE BUBBLE**
NEWS FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE



State | Arkansas Literary Festival 2018

The 15th annual Arkansas Literary Festival will commence April 26-29 in Little Rock. The event will feature Pulitzer and Grammy Award winners, filmmakers, singers and artists. Sessions will be held at the Central Arkansas' main library campus and many other Little Rock venues.

National | Barbara Bush Dies

Former first lady Barbara Bush died on Tuesday, April 17, according to an official statement from the Bush family. Bush was the second woman to be both first lady and the mother of a president. She was 92 years old.



International | U.S. Will Meet With North Korea

President Donald Trump remains adamant that he will meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un to discuss denuclearization and the release of three American prisoners, according to The Washington Post. According to Trump, the talks will occur in late May or early June.





From an alumna: Coffee's for closers



guest
writer

hannah j. moore

You might remember me as the opinions editor for The Bison in the 2016-17 school year. Or maybe you don't. I'm not extraordinarily memorable, so I don't blame you.

After an interview that I went to on my birthday with a broken toe from a dropped pizza pan incident, a girl with no experience and only a vague Delta Nu-related interest in coffee was graciously offered a job as a barista. I initially applied only because nobody else would give me a job, and I needed to support myself through grad school. I did not anticipate how much I would love it. Working here has definitely given me the opportunity to practice patience, both with myself and others. For example, when a customer doesn't realize their idea of a "caramel macchiato"

is a sham, I have to find a way to politely tell them that their favorite international coffee chain is brainwashing the minds of innocent caffeine-deficient soccer moms. But most importantly, being a barista for the past 10 months has majorly altered my career goals.

I got my bachelor's degree in public administration. I'm currently studying nonprofit management and will hopefully be finished with my master's degree next year. I now want to open my own nonprofit coffee shop. If someone had told me a year ago, as I was about to graduate, that I wasn't going to meet my future-president husband in an Ivy League law school scenario and that, instead, I would be happily studying IRS tax forms and statistics in pursuit of my own nonprofit specialty coffee project, I would have kicked them out of the political science honors society meeting. I'm not pursuing a career related to my chosen undergraduate major, yet I've never felt more liberated or more motivated to work hard for what I want.

A degree isn't an employment contract, it's just proof that you have interest in

a certain topic and have worked really hard to understand it. Most people will choose a career with some overlap with what they have a degree in, but this is not a requirement. Changing your longterm goals isn't a bad thing, it reflects the dynamic nature of being a flourishing human being. Just make sure whatever you're doing makes you happy.

Customers will often say to me, when I serve them an admittedly gorgeous-looking latte, "I almost don't want to drink it, it's so pretty!" If I wanted to have a serious, existential chat with each person that I served, I would reply, "Everything is temporary," in a very serious tone. I'm unfortunately afraid that this might scare some people off and get me fired, so instead I just say, "That's OK. Enjoy."

Dear seniors, the plans you've penciled in for today may not actually match what your life will look like tomorrow. That's OK. Enjoy.

HANNAH J. MOORE is a guest writer for The Bison. She may be contacted at moorehj17@gmail.com.



**BRAVER
THAN YOU
BELIEVE**

jaisa hogue

This is forever

My mom always thought I was weird for loving "Alice in Wonderland" so much. She preferred "The Wizard of Oz." But I loved that the story was full of inspiration and metaphors. One of my favorites is when Alice asks the White Rabbit, "How long is forever?"

"Sometimes, just one second," he said.

I know, time is relative in Wonderland, so he's probably being literal about that, but I think it's true in the real world as well. Sometimes forever can be found in just one second.

It's like in the movie "The Perks of Being a Wallflower." There's a scene where the main character and his two friends drive a truck through a tunnel with the radio blasting. One of them stands up in the truck bed, and you can see the wind filling the space around her. The main character does a voiceover and says that, in that moment, they felt infinite.

Right now, academics dominate our lives. We're constantly thinking about what internship we could possibly land for the summer or how low we can score on that last test and keep a B. This stress can consume our lives and make us feel stuck in this moment, unable to see where we're going. I think my roommate Hollee said it better than I could. She said, "Time flies by when you're having fun, but when you're stressed, every moment feels like a lifetime."

Hollie and I have made a tradition of going to Little Rock the Saturday before dead week in order to let go of some of this stress. We call it the Idealist Trip™ because our Myers Briggs personality types are INFP and INFJ, both of which fall into the idealist category. We hit up all the essential places: the River Market for bubble tea and that three-story book store, the mall, Kimchi's restaurant and Target.

That day allows us to step outside the stress and remind ourselves that, though we might feel like the stress will last forever, it will later feel like just another moment in our lives. Even though it's only a day trip to a town I grew up near, it serves as a way to remind us that there's more to our lives than this. Wandering around Little Rock, snapping pics of my best friend power posing on top of a stone bench by the river — it's exactly what we need to feel infinite, even for just a moment.

School has never been easy for me. I, like many others, grew up with an older sibling that set high standards in terms of grades. I don't think I ever really matched up to her in that regard, but when I look back at middle and high school, I don't remember what my grades were. I remember sitting on the sidewalk with her at lunch and talking about the boy she had a crush on. I remember spending afternoons at the library, exchanging book recommendations with her. It didn't matter if I made an A in AP Literature, which I didn't. What's important is that I made it through the class, which I did.

I've written a total of 20 columns this past academic year. I started each before this one with the idea that this time in our lives is important because it will determine our future. Now, I've learned that it's also important because this is the time for us to make memories that we'll one day look back on.

At the end of my very first column of the year, I challenged anyone who read it to take chances and push themselves in order to grow. I said this is your chance. To conclude my final column of the year, I'd like to challenge you to continue this process. But I'd like to add to it a reminder for both of us to take the time to make memories that will make us feel infinite.

And I'll end this one the same as how we started, by reminding you that you are capable. No matter where you go from here, I know you can make it. And when you're not sure about that, remember two things. First, sometimes forever can be just one moment, whether it's good or bad. The stress won't last. And second, as Christopher Robin said, "You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem and smarter than you think."

JAISA HOGUE is the opinions editor for The Bison. She may be contacted at jhogue@harding.edu. Twitter: [JaisaDanielle](https://twitter.com/JaisaDanielle)

The sky's the limit

"I was never one for studying. Why work hard if I could get good grades without it? Until, of course, I couldn't. I was a junior at Harding, faced with my first upper-level exam from a notorious history teacher. That attitude, paired with a total ignorance of what

to expect, resulted in a low D. My professor was disappointed, and she let me know. She also let me know, however, it wasn't the end. 'Well, you're not dead yet,' she said."

- Hunter Beck, '16 Graduate



For the rest of this opinion and more reflections from alumni, follow Student Publications on social media at [@hustudentpubs](https://twitter.com/hustudentpubs).

What do we do now?



guest
writer

lew knapp

Since the recent chemical attacks in Syria, the U.S., along with its French and British allies, has launched 58 tomahawk missiles into Damascus at Syrian military bases and government-held facilities. As the Syrian Civil War has begun dying down without coming close to ending, the question remains: what do we do now? I've pondered this question, and as a person who loves analyzing the Middle East, I can't think of a solution to this issue.

My biggest concern in all of this is for our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, who now number fewer than a few thousand since the start of the war. Many Christians either fled or stayed and created Christian militias such as the Ninevah Plains Protection Unit (NPU) to protect the thousand-year-old churches in the predominately Aramaic and Chaldean Christian areas of northern Syria. This is one of the many Christian militias that was formed in the beginnings of the Islamic States' rise to power in Syria and Iraq.

The second group I'm worried about is the Kurdish people. The Kurdish people, who are predominately Muslim, are a minority in both Syria and Iraq, who've claimed a large part of land known as Kurdistan, which is made up of four Middle Eastern countries. They are one of the many coalition groups that have fought ISIS and other groups since 2014 and are the biggest group that has helped push ISIS militants out of Iraq and parts Syria, even though many militants are still active across the region. As General Joseph Votel, the commander of U.S.

Central Command said recently, "They're the most effective force on the ground in Syria against ISIS." They're under fire, not just by Assad, but by Turkey, who considers them a group of terrorists and has recently attacked the Kurdish dominated town of Afrin in northern Syria.

Too many factors are put into play here as Assad, backed by the U.S.'s longtime rival, Russia, is accused of bombing his own people but claims by the Syrian government that the Syrian rebels even had some chemical weapons at hand, but Syrian news can't be 100 percent trusted because it's monitored by Bashar Al-Assad himself.

We can't forget that Israel is now thrown into the mix along with Iran, who, according to The New York Times, accused Israel of bombing the Syrian base T4 on Monday, April 9. Russia has also made these allegations. Israel has not come out about this, as the videos that have been leaked of the attack are too dark to see, but fighter jets can be heard in the background. However, a few weeks ago, Iran sent a drone through Syria into Israeli airspace, violating Israel's regulations, and this drone was shot down. In response, Israel launched an attack against Syria. So far, Israel has been very quiet when it comes to Syria. Israel has given refuge to thousands of injured Syrians since the beginning of the brutal war; however, it seems few have recognized this.

In regard to the coalition of missile attacks, which were all conducted by the U.S., United Kingdom and France, I can't tell if this is good or bad. President Trump tweeted a few days ago that the mission was a success; but just recently, ILTV, a news outlet in Israel, announced that Syrian and Russian officials claimed that the missile strikes weren't successful, and many of the missiles were shot out of the sky. Israeli officials also reported on ILTV that Assad still has about 10 percent of his stockpile of chemical weapons at

hand, so it's still unclear if the strikes were successful or not. I trust Israeli news over government-based Syrian news any day, but even Israelis aren't sure if any of this was smart or not.

Many on both sides of the political aisle in Washington D.C. agreed that this was a good move, but there are still many who disagree. Tucker Carlson, a news correspondent with whom I agree most of the time, recently weighed in with his thoughts about all of this on his nightly show on Fox News. He was very critical of the President's decisions and claimed there were other issues in the Middle East, like the massive humanitarian crisis in Yemen (in which he blamed the Saudis, but I completely disagree) and many other problems that are yet to be fixed, like Iraq. After the overthrow of dictator Saddam Hussein in the Iraq War of 2003, the U.S. military has always had a presence in Iraq. Not until 2011 did they pull out as a part of former President Obama's plan, but many issues followed, starting with the corrupt leadership. Then the Islamic State grew and brought havoc into Iraq and Syria, killing thousands from all minority and majority groups. Now that ISIS is out of Iraq, the country needs to begin reconstruction from years of conflict.

I know this is all very confusing, and many can't wrap their heads around this migraine of a conflict. That is why I want us as believers to understand what's going on in the most complicated region in the world and how that affects our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. Seeing all these news headlines, it can be difficult to follow, but the one question I keep asking myself is: what do we do now? I don't have the answer, and I don't think anyone does, but by the grace of God, all this chaos will stop soon.

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KEEP IT SAVVY

savanna distefano

Friends like these

Meet Kaity. We met sometime between freshman and sophomore year. I don't remember how or when we met. We had some mutual friends, but I cannot recall any initial conversations or time spent in extracurricular activities that would have led to a friendship. But I do remember one scenario.

I was in my dorm room in Kendall Hall when I received a phone call from Kaity. I think she wanted to go driving — the most adventurous activity in Searcy.

From taking rides to sharing meals, Kaity and I grew to learn a lot about each other. However, we quickly learned that she and I are hardly anything alike. I still think it's because of divine intervention that we are such great friends.

Kaity's great, don't get me wrong. She has an outspoken, carefree personality. She loves people, animals and pizza. She is one of the most intentionally loving people I have ever met, and I don't know what I would have done without her the last two or three years.

However, sometimes it seems we disagree on almost every level about nearly everything. We differ in our political views, religious interpretations and general approach to life. I tend to follow a set pattern and routine for each of my days. Kaity prefers spontaneity and giving her full attention to any person who may cross her path. While she makes friends with strangers, I interview them.

While you can hear her laugh from across the room at Midnight Oil, you will hardly know that I am there, occupying a corner near the window. I like order, cleanliness and a quiet place for concentration. She couldn't care less about disorganization and chaos.

Though we are very different people, we have found common ground in our opposite ways of thinking. We are able to pick each other's brains and respectfully allow each other's thoughts and ideas to shape our own. In Kaity's words, "we just clicked."

I could not have asked for a better friend. She has challenged me — asking hard questions and testing my patience. She has taught me selflessness and audacity (though I am definitely still pretty timid).

As for my four years at Harding, I cannot think of better way to sum up my experience than my relationship with Kaity: unexpected, diverse and challenging — a time of growth.

I was not very involved in my youth group until the end of high school. I was never close friends with many of the kids my age, and I always wished I had begun participating in church activities sooner to grow from Christ-minded peers.

When I came to Harding in the fall of 2014, I thought I would find the friends of my dreams: who believed the same as I did, had the same goals in mind and who were willing to drop everything to go across the world to spread the Gospel and help some people along the way.

And, I don't think I found exactly what I was looking for. I took up the habit of overworking and underappreciating the events offered on campus and in Searcy. I became too comfortable and familiar with one group of friends (who are also great), and it was not until I was in my last year of college that I realized how many great relationships I had passed on due to my unwillingness to invest. I missed opportunities to be challenged by new people.

Thankfully, Kaity never stopped asking questions. She never stopped calling, texting and showing up at my doorstep. I think we all need to find a few friends like Kaity, people who are vastly different — who will continue to challenge and inspire us to be different.

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THE QUESTIONS OF A GRADUATE:

OH MIRROR IN THE SKY,
WHAT IS LOVE?
CAN THE CHILD WITHIN
MY HEART RISE ABOVE?
CAN I SAIL THROUGH
THE CHANGING OCEAN TIDES?



CAN I HANDLE
THE SEASONS
OF MY LIFE?

Illustration by RACHEL GIBSON

The future is female and doesn't have time for styling products



guest writer

isabelle graessle

One, "I ran out of shampoo and didn't have enough money to buy more."

Two, "I was channeling my 2007 Britney Spears."

Three, "I'm a biology major; I don't have time for anything else."

I shaved my head two weeks ago, and these are just a few of the witty responses that I have come up with to answer the popular question: "Why did you do it?"

I did it because I wanted to, and that was a good enough reason for me.

I have wanted to shave my head for years now, but until now, I never had the courage to follow through with it. I think the main

reason for holding back is how our society has defined beauty in the past, but that definition is quickly evolving.

There have been a bunch of stories in the media recently about influential women shaving their heads that I have been reading in order to try to put my feelings into words. Something I found in common with my and all of these other women's experiences is that we have never felt more free than we do now.

There is no more hiding behind our hair, using it as a shield to hide ourselves from the world. It has released us from the pressure of trying to fit in and we are giving the world the rawest versions of ourselves, which is extremely empowering. The freedom that comes with not abiding by the rules of feminine beauty that society has laid out has given me and many other women confidence we didn't even know we had.

One thing that model and actress Cara Delevingne said after shaving her head that has stuck with me is this: "It's exhausting to

be told what beauty should look like. I am tired of society defining beauty for us. Strip away the clothes, wipe off the makeup, cut off the hair. Remove all the material possessions. Who are we? How are we defining beauty? What do we see as beautiful?"

We cannot conform to the idea that our beauty is defined by the length of our hair, because we are so much more than dead skin cells. I strongly believe that your beauty comes from the kindness and joy that you spread through your personality. I am not saying that everyone should go shave their heads right now, because everyone expresses themselves in different ways. Mine just happens to be with no hair.

I feel confident, I feel beautiful, I feel free, and most importantly, I feel like I'm finally me.

ISABELLE GRAESSLE is a guest writer for *The Bison*. She may be contacted at igraessle@harding.edu.

Thank you!

"To all of those who contributed to *The Bison* this year, thank you. We have appreciated your submissions."

- Jaisa Hogue

Just the Clax

The walk



michael claxton

The English Department has a roundtable discussion most Fridays, where faculty and students bring lunch and chat. Last week we talked about walking. We had a guest from the Kinesiology Department who helped us appreciate some of the mechanics of the activity, but — this being the English Department — we mostly read engaging insights into the subject from famous writers.

Walking, so I learned, is relaxing, good for your health and a splendid opportunity to observe the world. The whole discussion reminded me of the time I took a walk.

I think it was about 20 years ago. I was a graduate student at the University of North Carolina (UNC) Chapel Hill, and every day, I drove 10 miles to campus from the condo where I lived in Durham, NC. One sunny Thursday afternoon after classes, I went to my car and saw the keys sitting on the passenger seat, safely locked away. I had no duplicate set with me and no cell phone.

So, I decided to walk home. My thought process went something like this: "It's a nice day out. Why don't I just walk to Durham?" And then, for the sake of irony, I thought, "I don't want to walk all the way back to the office to call for a ride. That would take 10 minutes."

The 10-mile drive home turned into a four-hour walk.

If the ratio seems rather long to you, perhaps you are picturing the speed of a person who is in shape. And a person who walks more often than once every two decades.

I set out from the parking lot on campus and headed down the hill to 15-501, the busy road that thousands of cars traveled daily. But rather than go all the

way to the bottom of the hill, my second brilliant idea for the afternoon was to take a shortcut through the woods. Had I ever been in those particular woods before? Of course not.

I simply remembered from high school geometry that the shortest route between two points is a straight line. Unfortunately, my teacher never mentioned anything about how to walk through a swamp. As it turns out, it had rained heavily the day before, and much of the woods was now a marsh. Using the motto "It's too late to turn back now" that I received at birth along with my X and Y chromosomes, I soldiered on.

At one point, I was slogging through water up to my calves. While a normal outdoorsman would have been concerned about mosquito bites and cottonmouths, it is telling that my biggest source of distress was the condition of my argyle socks. Eventually, I made it to the road, feeling no doubt exactly what Ferdinand Magellan must have felt.

I looked at my watch and realized that, after the first 45 minutes, I had gone almost one block. But from there it was a straight 10-mile shot to the condo ... through heavy afternoon traffic. Fortunately, I had on my tweed sport coat and tie and was carrying an umbrella. With soggy argyle socks to complete the costume, I was the picture of an intrepid Englishman out for

an afternoon stroll. I took a deep breath, smiled at the clear sky overhead and began.

No more than fifteen minutes later, I was already over it. It was hot. There were no sidewalks. I took off my sport coat and wore it like a pharaoh's headdress. After the second hour, I opened my umbrella to shield myself from the sun. Passing motorists did not stop to inquire if I was OK. I'm sure they assumed the spectacle was part of a film shoot.

A moment of high drama occurred when I suddenly remembered that 15-501 crossed Highway 40. Navigating the narrow shoulder in a tweed turban and umbrella ranks among the more incredible things I've done in my life. What a story they could have told at the funeral.

As I neared the final stretch, I was at the point of collapse: exhausted, delirious, soaked to the bone and rank. In my feverish state I may even have channeled Richard III, shouting, "My kingdom for a horse" at a passing sedan.

The low point came as I was less than half a mile from the condo. Each Thursday evening, my roommate and I hosted a Bible study. Imagine my chagrin when I saw one of our regulars pass me in his Honda Civic, wave and keep driving.

But I made it, and after the study, someone drove me back to campus to get my car. Looking back on the adventure now, I only have one regret. It's a shame I didn't have a Fitbit, because this one trek would have filled my quota of steps for the next 25 years.

MICHAEL CLAXTON is a guest writer for *The Bison*. He may be contacted at mclaxto1@harding.edu.

At the *Bison*, it is our goal to serve the Harding University student body with integrity, truth and open ears. However, we believe that meeting that goal is a two-way street between our staff and the public it serves. We pledge to keep our eyes and ears open to what our community has to say and hope that, in return, that community will be an interactive audience, sharing its stories with us. We also pledge to do the basics: Report accurate and relevant information, check our facts, and share them in a professional, timely manner. If you have any story ideas, questions, comments or concerns for the *Bison* staff, please email Savanna DiStefano, the editor-in-chief, at sdistefano@harding.edu. "The *Bison* (USPS 577-660) is published weekly (except vacations, exams and summer sessions), 20 issues per year, by Harding University. Periodicals postage paid at Searcy, Arkansas 72143. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The Bison*, Harding University 11192, SEARCY, AR 72149-0001." BYLINE POLICY: The *Bison* provides an opportunity for class writers to contribute work under the byline "guest writers." Due to this arrangement, staff writers may rewrite a portion of the guest writers' stories as they deem necessary, while still identifying the work as the guest writers' own.

THE BISON

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THE
GRAND
SLAM

emily
faulkner

The end of a chapter

Growing up, I was the typical kid who participated in as many different sports as possible. Gymnastics, swimming, basketball, soccer — you name it, and I at least tried it. I started playing tennis when I was 10. Both of my parents played throughout high school and college, and I decided in high school that tennis was the sport I wanted to focus on most throughout the next few years. Then came college.

I was torn between going to a big state university like many of my friends or continuing to play tennis. I knew I would have to attend a lower division school in order to pursue these athletic endeavors. That's how I ended up at Harding. It has been one of the best decisions of my life.

I debated writing this column about my time at Harding and revealing all of the juicy stories of the Harding tennis team throughout the years. But I then stopped and thought about how I would much rather focus on these past few weeks and how much they have meant to me.

My senior quote from high school remains one of my favorite quotes today. Even though it is long, it captures what tennis has meant to me throughout the years and how the sport is applicable to many life lessons as well.

The quote is by Andre Agassi, a professional tennis player who helped in, a sense, revive tennis in America during the 1990s and early 2000s. He is considered by many to be one of the best players of all time. After losing his final tennis match at the U.S. Open, Agassi gave a farewell speech.

"The scoreboard said I lost today," Agassi told the crowd. "But what the scoreboard doesn't say is what it is I have found. Over the last 21 years, I have found loyalty. You have pulled for me on the court and also in life.

I found inspiration. You have willed me to succeed, sometimes even in my lowest moments. And I've found generosity. You have given me your shoulders to stand on to reach for my dreams, dreams I could never have reached without you. Over the last 21 years, I have found you, and I will take you and the memory of you with me for the rest of my life." (The New York Times)

I have heard it said that the last year of college, you learn more than the first three years combined. Whether that is true is hard to say, but I would say this past year has been one of the best years of my life, not just on the tennis court — because I have had trials there — but off it as well.

Even though I have only played tennis for 11 years and at the Division II level, I find so much truth in Agassi's speech. At the end of the day, I will remember the people met, memories made and lessons learned throughout the years. I never could have imagined becoming so close to my teammates in my final year, but I will truly be sad to leave.

Every match this season has been a battle. We are going into conference this weekend as the fourth seed, but I could not be prouder of each woman and the individual lessons I have learned from all of them. I can call them not just my teammates, but some of my best friends.

I hope this column has been a space that has inspired or helped in some way. Even though not everyone plays a sport or knows athletics, we are similar in more ways than we might think.

Some relationships I have formed in classrooms have taught me more than the work I have done. My coworkers constantly inspire me to be the best version of myself and to selflessly serve others. My club has given me sisters that an only child could only dream of having.

As I say goodbye, I just want you to always remember: do not get so caught up in the game that you don't stop and look around to learn and love the other players. Life is not always about the results, but rather the journey itself.

EMILY FAULKNER is the head sports editor for The Bison. She may be contacted at efaulkner@harding.edu.

FIGHTING ON AND OFF THE COURT

Alumna uses athleticism for career

DUSTIN SCHANDEVEL
asst. sports editor

Alumna Kinsey Bradford played basketball her entire life, but she did not want to play in the WNBA — she wanted to become a firefighter.

Kinsey Bradford moved from her hometown of Searcy to Portland, Oregon, when she was 11, after her mother died of cancer in 1997. The move showed Kinsey Bradford what she wanted to do with her life.

"In Portland, they have a lot of smokejumpers (firefighters who parachute into a remote area to combat wildfires)," Kinsey Bradford said. "I skydived a couple times and thought it would be pretty cool to be a smokejumper. I got pretty interested in fire there and always enjoyed physical labor. I've always known it's what I wanted to do."

Kinsey Bradford led the Lady Bisons basketball team during her time on the team from 2004-08. She ranked second in Harding's former conference (in assist average with 4.14) assists per game during her senior year, and she is Harding's career leader in free throws at 84.7 percent. She was a sophomore when women's head coach Tim Kirby started his career at Harding, and his impact on her life was huge.

"Had I not played for coach Kirby, it would have been detrimental to my career as a firefighter. He was so hard on you in a good way, he really pushed you to your limit," Kinsey Bradford said. "I've fought fire and had a lot of hard rescues, but the hardest thing I've physically done is run a six-minute mile. I thought I was going to die."

In their three years together, Kirby saw something unique in Kinsey Bradford's work ethic.

"She's the toughest player we've ever had," Kirby said. "Whatever you asked her to do, she did it. She's pretty impressive."

"I remember getting butterflies before every game — just the thought of going out there — and I wanted to do everything right. That's how it is with a house fire. You want to do everything right and put out the fire as quick as you can. It's also a lot of teamwork; you're not going into a house fire or basketball game by yourself."

-Kinsey Bradford Harding women's basketball alumna

Kinsey Bradford showed her resilience when she went to Nashville her senior year of college to take the physical agility test for the fire department. She passed the written test and showed off her physical abilities in a major way.

"My senior year, I went to a bunch of big cities and took tests to get experienced, because in the fire department, the more experience you have interviewing, the better you'll be," Kinsey Bradford said. "In Nashville, I went out there and gave it all I had

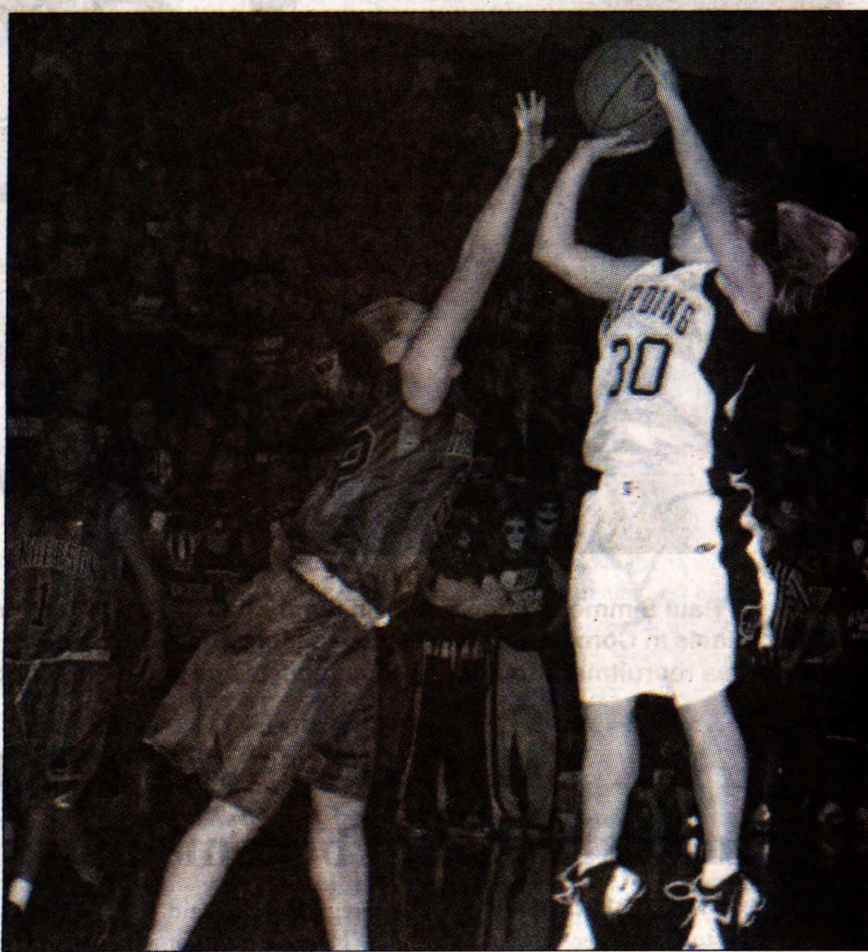


Photo courtesy of 2006 PETIT JEAN
Bradford shoots during a basketball game on Jan. 28, 2006, during her sophomore year at Harding.

and was recovering afterward when they told me that I broke the female record for their agility test. They offered me a job, but I turned them down because I wanted to finish school."

After graduation, Kinsey Bradford accomplished her goal when she was hired as a firefighter in Portland. She then quit her job and moved back to Arkansas because she met her husband, Greg Bradford, before her senior year and wanted to be close to him.

"He's my number one supporter. He's very proud of me and he tells me all the time, which is more than I deserve," Kinsey Bradford said. "I married up, and he's way too good for me, and I think everyone around me knows that. He sits and lets me tell all of my stories and acts like he's still listening after so many years."

Kinsey Bradford became a firefighter EMT on engine 17 in Little Rock in 2011. She works at a single house with one fire truck moving out of her station, with a team of three other firefighters. Any time 911 is called in her district, her team responds.

"Firefighting is so much fun. It's different every day," Kinsey Bradford said. "The job always surprises you. There's always calls that you don't expect, and you think people are crazy. You see some really hard stuff sometimes, and things are hard to get over mentally."

Reflecting on her basketball days, Kinsey Bradford compared the nerves before a game to responding to a fire call.

"I remember getting butterflies before every game — just the thought of going out there — and I wanted to do everything right," Kinsey Bradford said. "That's how it is with a house fire. You want to do everything right and put out the fire as quick as you can. It's also a lot of teamwork; you're not going into a house fire or basketball game by yourself."

Firefighters work 24-hour shifts and have the following 48 hours off. Kinsey Bradford said some days, her team will respond to 15 calls, and the next only three or four. In response to various 911 calls full of violent acts, Kinsey Bradford said her faith has been vital in keeping her sane.

"It's everything. You see so many bad things being a firefighter and, as a Christian, you have to understand that God's in control, even though it doesn't seem like it," Kinsey Bradford said. "We've worked a lot of shootings in southwest Little Rock. Kids shooting kids. And that's where my faith has saved me and kept me going. Part of the beauty of being a Christian is God is always there and you know he's in control. He's always by my side, and that's what really gets me through."

Kinsey Bradford graduated from Harding in 2008 and said it is crucial for one to know what they believe before entering the real world.

"I think the biggest thing I wish people would've told me is that, when you get out there, it's going to be a lot tougher than you think," Bradford said. "You just have to stick to what you know and stand firm in it."

Bradford lives in Damascus, Arkansas, and is raising three girls with her husband. She encourages college athletes to look forward to the future, be grateful for what they have and put Christ first and, from there, everything will fall into place.



Photo courtesy of KINSEY BRADFORD

Nick Harris, alumna Kinsey Bradford, and John Fulbright are firefighters at Station 17 in Little Rock, Arkansas. Bradford has enjoyed working in this station and the duties of being a firefighter since graduating from Harding.



STERLING MCMICHAEL | The Bison

Head coach Paul Simmons addresses his team after the 31-17 loss to Texas A&M Commerce University in the national semifinals in Commerce, Texas, last season. The NCAA made a new rule regarding scholarship offerings that will serve as a recruitment tool for Harding sports starting next school year.

NCAA rule allows more scholarship

Harding expected to become more affordable for athletes

BOWMAN JOHNSON
student writer

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) revised a regulation rule regarding their scholarship offerings. For the 2018-19 school year, NCAA athletes will have looser regulations on the types of scholarships they can receive. Currently, the NCAA only allows a certain amount of money to go toward scholarships, and there is a certain amount of scholarships that schools are allowed to offer.

The new NCAA rule states there is no change on athletic scholarships, but there is a change on the countable aid. The changes were brought about from a three-year review of the division's aid rules that was led by the Division II Legislation Committee, according to NCAA.org.

"The majority of countable aid as defined by the NCAA as any athletic aid, as well as any institutional aid other than exempted academic aid as awarded according to high academic achievement," Athletic Director

Greg Harnden said.

Harnden said for a scholarship to not be countable, it has to consist of three things: an athlete or student must have an ACT score of 25 or higher, be in the top 20 percent of their high school class or have a high school GPA of 3.5.

For Division I football, there are 85 full scholarships that the program can offer and for Division II football, there are 36 full scholarships can be offered.

Head football coach Paul Simmons said the rule is not a Harding rule, it is a new NCAA regulation concerning scholarship money.

"You have two different types of financial aid," Simmons said. "You have what is called countable aid and non-countable aid."

According to Simmons, the new rules do not place a limit on how much scholarship money an athlete can get. They allow athletes to receive other types of scholarship money that was not available to them in the past.

An athlete now can keep an academic scholarship from a high ACT score as well

as an athletic scholarship offered by the school, but Harnden said there are still some limitations.

"For example, if a student receives institutional money such as the presidential scholarship or an academic scholarship that does not meet the NCAA requirement, an athlete may not stack it because it may cause that specific sport to go over the NCAA financial limit," Harnden said. "Limits are placed on each sport to level the awarded aid among institutions."

With the new rule in place, this can serve as a recruitment pitch for Harding sports to grow in their rosters for each sport, according to Simmons.

"This is going to be a big recruitment tool because of the culture we have developed here," Simmons said. "We have many men with a desire to be at Harding and for some, it is just barely out of reach financially."

Simmons said he expects that every team at Harding will increase in numbers because of the new rule since it will make Harding more affordable.



guest
writer

taylor hodges

Fighting complacency

I am someone who hates complacency, but I didn't learn this about myself until I transferred to Harding from Freed-Hardeman in the fall of 2014, which was the first time I truly got away from home.

When I was at Freed, I thought I was going to be a history teacher who maybe coached soccer and would probably end up settling down in the same town I grew up in. Doing that isn't necessarily a bad thing, I just knew it wasn't for me.

When I graduated from Harding with my degree in journalism last May, I had dreams of being a sports writer or a columnist for big newspapers and publications in big cities like New York, D.C. or Chicago. I was working on making that a reality, too — saving up money and sending out hundreds of resumes and cover letters to the smaller newspapers in those cities. But I also applied to jobs closer to home or in smaller locations as well.

One of those jobs offered me a position, and my mindset immediately went back to the one I had while I was at Freed.

I thought I had to take the first job offered to me, because it could take weeks, months and maybe even years for me to get another offer, so I accepted the position as a sports information assistant at a small private university in Alabama.

I figured that since it was a job centered around sports — which is what I have always wanted — I could make it work and be happy, but I was wrong. I wasn't happy, because had I settled and didn't take the time to truly work for what I wanted.

Needless to say, I didn't last very long at that job. I am now working my second full-time position as a sports writer for a local paper just south of Nashville in less than a year after graduation, and I couldn't be happier. This is the job I wish I had been patient for and waited on instead of jumping to the first opportunity given to me without thinking about how it would affect me.

If there is one thing I have learned after graduation about finding a job and loving it when you get one, it's that you shouldn't settle, and be patient.

I am terrible at staying in one place for too long. Luckily, being a sports writer doesn't require me to do that. It can take me anywhere in the world. There will always be a need for them and there will always be room to grow and possibly work my way up to one of those cities I dreamed about when I first transferred to Harding.

Be patient, weigh your options, and don't settle for anything less than a job you know will help you reach your dreams and goals.

TAYLOR HODGES is a guest writer for The Bison. He was the head sports editor for The Bison in 2017.



LOCKER TALK

HARDING ATHLETES' VIEWS ON



Nolan Fertig
baseball



Katelyn Walker
golf



Mason Banger
golf



Emily Faulkner
tennis



Landry Dowdy
track

What would your perfect summer consist of?

Hitting dingers, seeing friends and family.

Spending the summer in Australia doing fun things.

Playing golf somewhere in the Bahamas.

Going to the beach and not working at all.

Getting married before my sister.

What is your favorite summer song?

"Summer Wind" - Frank Sinatra.

"Paradise" - George Ezra.

"Country Road" - John Denver.

"California Girls" - Katy Perry.

"Donald Trump" - Mac Miller.

What is your favorite memory from your first summer job?

Working at Club Chiquito in Rio San Juan.

Getting paid to lay by the pool and play free golf (nanny).

I have not had a summer job, I just play golf.

Staff pool parties with the other lifeguards.

Counting that lemonade stand haul at the end of the day.

What is your advice to freshmen for finals week?

Rewrite the stars, do really well.

Go hard because you will get to take a big breath of relief soon!

Play video games all night.

Try not to stress too much.

Don't text and drive and know you can prevent forest fires.



Remote & Recline: ninety-six Bisbee years

The final installment of the 'Harding Place' series featuring the facility residents

PAIGE CUSHMAN
asst. PR/Marketing

Ninety-six-year-old Joel Bisbee is the oldest and longest resident of Harding Place. The World War II veteran has lived there for 16 years and said he knows almost every resident. He still drives his own car, has scored at least eight 300-point Wii Bowling games since moving in and, according to a member of the staff on his hall, cheats at cards.

When his wife Sybil Bisbee got sick in the early 2000s, Bisbee retired from his job at the post office in Searcy to stay at home and take care of her.

"One day I was cutting wood for our fireplace, and I knicked my knee with that saw. It made a gash, but if I was moving full speed, it probably would've cut my leg off," Bisbee said. "My daughters got together and decided I didn't need to be cutting wood. We were going out to eat and they said 'Let's go to this Harding Place.' I knew what was up when they brought me out here. I didn't want to move out here, but it's the best thing I ever did."

Joel and Sybil Bisbee moved into Harding Place in 2002 and were going on 65 years of marriage when she died in 2011.

"When my wife died, I decided, 'Man, this is the best place for me.' They cook and clean and make your bed on Tuesdays. I don't have to do anything but read the papers and watch TV," Bisbee said. "I get a lot of R&R — remote and recline."

He met Sybil while she was working at a power plant in Jacksonville, Arkansas, making ammunition during World War II and rooming with his niece. They corresponded via mail until the end of the war.

They spent 60 days of his leave together before he was stationed in San Diego, California, and it was then that he decided he was ready to get married.

"She was 21, and I was 24. She was a Christian, and I was nothing but a hillbilly I guess," Joel Bisbee said. "She didn't know anything about married life and I didn't either. She put up with me, and I'm sure glad



Photo Courtesy of ABIGAIL COOPER

Joel Bisbee reclines in his chair at Harding Place where he enjoys what he calls R&R — remote and recline. Bisbee is the oldest resident at Harding Place and has lived there for 16 years, the longest of any resident.

she did. You're not supposed to be unequally yoked with somebody."

For years he would drop her off at church and pick her back up afterward, only visiting occasionally. He said he thought he was unfit for Christianity because he smoked and enjoyed a beer every once in a while.

In Washington D.C., they lived in an apartment complex with other Church of Christ families, and he began to attend services with his wife and said he enjoyed gospel meetings with their preacher. However, it took one more positive influence for him to convert.

"My daughter became a Christian before I did and that made me think," Joel Bisbee

said. "Something just came over me, and I was baptized. I stopped the smoking and drinking and everything else and became a Christian and have been one ever since."

Through his time in the Navy, they moved around California, Florida, Hawaii, and Washington D.C., but after 24 years with the military, Joel Bisbee retired. He moved his family to Searcy, worked for the post office and became a deacon at Downtown Church of Christ, where he still attends.

"I was an Arkansas guy at heart," Joel Bisbee said.

Joel Bisbee, an avid Razorbacks fan, grew up west of Little Rock and, while he dropped out of school in the 8th grade to work with

his dad as a logger, he encourages young people, like his daughters who both attended Harding, to pursue their education.

"Hang in there and get a good education. I never had one," Joel Bisbee said. "When I joined the Navy I didn't know anything hard. I finally got a GED, but that was after the war was over. I didn't realize what a bad mistake it was to not get an education. That's why I wanted my girls to get one."

As for his age, he considers it nothing but a number.

"I don't feel any different than when I was 20. A lot of people don't believe I'm 96," Joel Bisbee said. "I just grew up and never realized I was getting old."



Photos courtesy of MACY PATE

(Left) Alumna Macy Pate and her friend Emily Breedlove sit in their van, "Lil' Ma" on Feb. 21, a month into their country-wide adventure. (Top right) On April 5, the pair and "Lil' Ma" traveled to Joshua Tree National Park in California where they saw two full rainbows in one day. (Bottom right) Pate poses in Yosemite National Park, California on April 9, after a day of hiking.

Van life means countless miles of adventure

EMILY FAULKNER
head sports editor

What has four wheels, is fully furnished and called "Lil' Ma"? The answer is alumna Macy Pate's 1995 Chevy sport G20 van that she and her high school friend Emily Breedlove are currently using to travel across the country.

According to Pate, she and Breedlove were inspired to begin van life after following the Instagram account of Jace and Giddi, the couple behind @ourhomeonwheels.

"(They have) been living in a van fulltime for two years," Pate said. "They were very helpful and open about their lifestyle and, after some research, we realized how possible it really was."

Pate and Breedlove outfitted their van with a bed, two burner propane stove top and a refrigerator. The remodel of the vehicle took the pair a year to complete, finishing Jan. 21, the day before they intended to embark on their cross-country adventure.

Beginning in Texas, the pair intends to hit every national park and big city, parking at campsites and in national forests for the night, before ending their trek in South Dakota.

So far, they have traveled through Texas, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Nevada and California.

Some of their favorite national parks so far include Pinnacles National Park in California and Arches National Park in Utah. Their favorite state so far has been Arizona.

Currently in Oregon, they will head through Washington,

Canada, Montana and South Dakota. Pate says one park they are most looking forward to visiting is Banff National Park in Alberta, Canada.

According to Pate, their purpose behind the trip is to live life to the fullest.

"We are doing it because we love road trips and we love seeing new places and experiencing new things," Pate said in a blog post on Jan. 10. "We are doing it because we are young and able and blessed and not tied down just yet. So, I guess the short answer would be, 'why not?'"

Pate said her family and friends doubted her capabilities and were originally skeptical of the idea of taking on van life.

"I think for the most part everyone doubted us (at first), which is understandable," Pate said. "Once we bought the van, our parents kind of realized just how serious we were and immediately began helping us in any way they could. Then, when the conversion was almost finished, other friends started to get on board. Now the doubt has turned into complete support."

Pate said she loves trips. Some of her favorite memories from Harding include driving to Washington D.C. and Albuquerque, New Mexico, for two separate three-day weekends.

According to Pate, their journey has gone smoothly up to this point.

"We have been very lucky to not have any real problems thus far," Pate said. "One night, when we were parked somewhere we weren't technically supposed to be, we got

scared awake by a construction worker banging on our door. That's the only time we've been spooked, but we totally deserved it."

Pate knows that van life is just temporary for her, but she is looking forward to whatever the future has in store.

"I really wish I would have known that I had time to figure everything out," Pate said. "There's this major pressure on us as college students to know what we are going to do for the rest of our lives by the age of 20, but the reality is that we can do multiple things. ... Our career doesn't have to be set in stone yet. We have time to change our minds and make mistakes. Dreams can evolve, and mine definitely have."

To keep up with all of their van life adventures, follow Pate and Breedlove on Instagram at @van.babes, read Pate's blog on macypatephotos.com or read Breedlove's blog on emilybreedlove.info.

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Kibo Midnight Oil to host fusion folk band

MATTHEW KING
student writer

The Collection will perform a free concert at Kibo Midnight Oil (MO) Monday, April 23 as part of their Beautiful Life tour.

According to MO manager Jared Davenport, MO traditionally brings smaller artists and as a result, the turnout lacks in number. However, Davenport says The Collective's popularity among students will increase the typical attendance numbers.

The band started their tour in Asheville, North Carolina, at the beginning of April. They will end their journey May 5 in Carrboro, North Carolina, after performing 18 shows.

"They're a blast to see live," Davenport said. "They're going to be very interactive with the crowd. They've got horns and strings and, in some of their videos, they have accordions. They all look like they're having a blast."

Although most of the members in the band play and perform with multiple instruments, Davenport said the band has a solo singer/songwriter feel but a full band sound. The band was originally David Wimbish's solo project that grew into the full band that now consists of six members.

"They have great underlying spiritual message. It's not explicit, so it's very accessible to all crowds. It's not your typical worship band," Davenport said.

The Collection comes from a Christian background and discusses themes of questioning morality and spirituality in their songs.

"The Collection is probably one of my favorite bands because they're a band that puts a lot of effort into making everything work," senior Jackson Russell said. "Their albums have cohesive themes instead of just a bunch of songs thrown together."



Photo courtesy of Peyton Lee

The Collection, a folk band that incorporates orchestral and indie rock elements, will be playing a free show during their Beautiful Life tour at Kibo Midnight Oil on Monday, April 23. Doors open at 7 p.m. and the show begins at 8 p.m.

The Collection's newest album, "Listen to the River," was released in March and is available on iTunes and Spotify.

"They're about community, vulnerability and raw music," senior Noah Sandlin said. "(Lead singer) David Wimbish's voice is really raw and I think that's really what sets them apart. It sounds like family playing music."

"Their songs stem from an awareness of their state's folk roots and an appreciation of orchestral and world music," the band's website said.

Doors open at 7 p.m. and the show begins at 8 p.m. For more information about this event or their tour, visit The Collection's Facebook page and their website at www.thecollectionband.com.

Review:

"A Quiet Place"

EMILY NICKS
student writer

"A Quiet Place," rated PG-13, opened in theaters on April 6, earning \$50.2 million its opening weekend. Featuring John Krasinski as the writer, director and main character, as well as actress Emily Blunt, the suspenseful horror thriller is certified fresh on Rotten Tomatoes, with a 95 percent critic rating.

The premise of the film is that, in the near future, Earth has been invaded by mysterious creatures who rely on sound to hunt. In this dangerous world, staying silent means staying alive. The film follows a family's efforts to survive in a seemingly impossible situation while they continue to deal with normal issues such as parenting, relationship struggles and even doing laundry, all in a state of near-silence. It is a story that is tense at times, touching and, of course, terrifying.

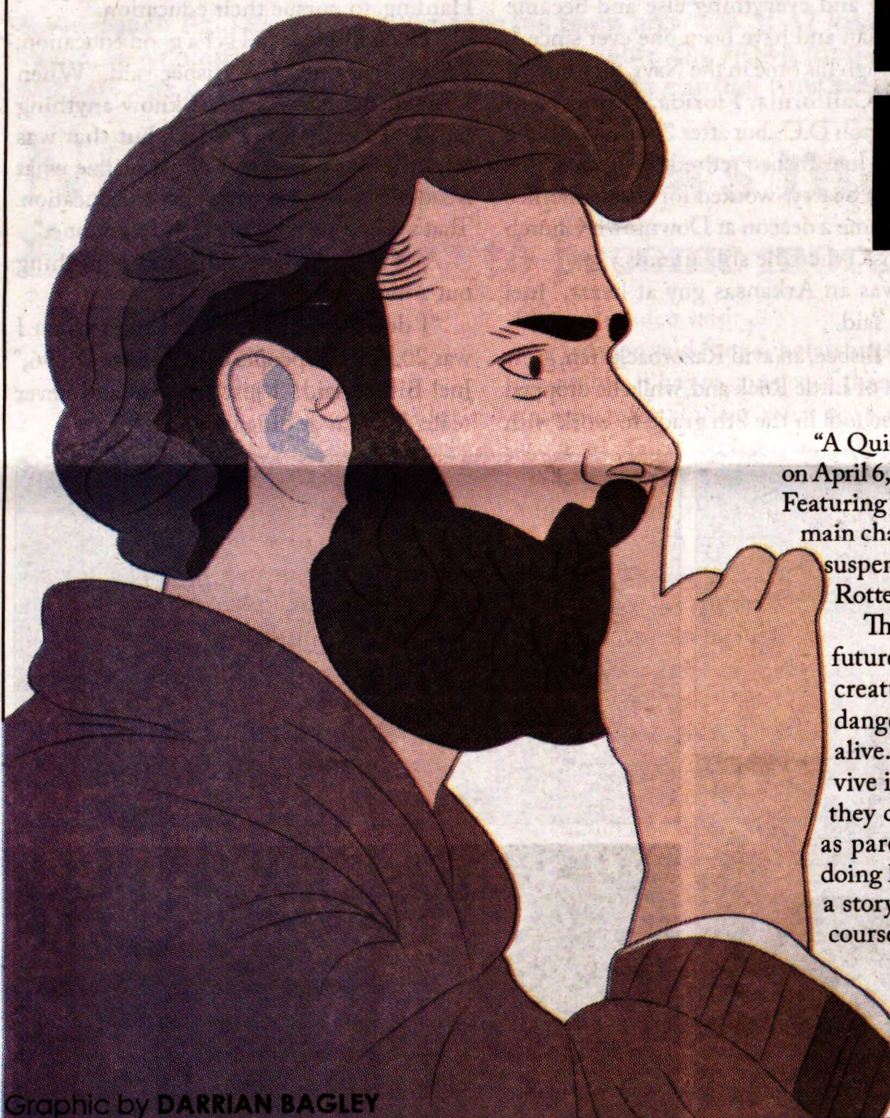
"A Quiet Place" unfolds with almost no spoken dialogue, but don't let that confuse you; this is not a silent film. In a movie where man-made noise plays the role of the antagonist, sound demands your

attention. The rustle of a corn field, the quiet pad of bare feet, the babble of a stream — these sounds, as well as the more sinister ones, make this film stand out.

If the storyline is what makes this movie a hit, and the auditory experience is what makes it a breakthrough, the acting is what will make it a legend. Krasinski and Blunt, who are married in real life, showcase a love that is sacrificing, steadfast and strong. Millicent Simmonds also shines as Regan, the deaf oldest child of the family. Simmonds, a deaf actress, portrays a tenacity and boldness through her expressions and signed conversations. The family is one you cannot help but root for.

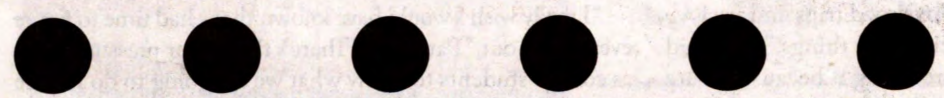
"A Quiet Place" is not one to miss while showing in theaters. Do not wait to see it for the first time in your living room; this movie demands to be experienced in a distraction-free environment with others who are also on the edge of their seats.

It has been an eventful few years for the horror genre. After the incredible success of "Get Out" last year, many were curious to see if the genre would continue to grow. With "A Quiet Place," it is clear that it will. If you have not made plans to see "A Quiet Place" yet, you are missing out. This is a film that will be talked about for years to come.



Graphic by DARRIAN BAGLEY

FAREWELL, SENIORS!



From all of the senior staff members, we would like to thank you for your readership and participation with The Bison this year. As graduation is nearing, we are thankful for the opportunity to serve the Harding community as students and as fellow inheritors of this award-winning publication!

Back row: Raianne Mason, Dustin Shandavel, Julia Reinboldt, Rachel Gibson, Jacob Ardrey

Middle row: Hannah Hitchcox, Paige Cushman, Emily Faulkner, Delilah Pope

Front Row: Savanna DiStefano, Natalie Smith



DECLASSIFIED

Post-Grad
Survival Guide

THE BISON

April 20, 2018

Vol. 93 No. 20

Special Section

Debt
continued from 1A

"I wish I had known how much of a burden they are. Loans can be debilitating," Harville said. "Our society has changed to where it is seen as a necessity for success, but the cost is astronomical."

Still, students should not forego a good education due to fear of debt, according to Marti Pike. Instead, they should treat the decision like a personal investment.

"When you invest in college, you're investing in yourself and your abilities," Pike said. "If you work hard, it will pay off. As soon as you start paying into yourself you start to accumulate better opportunities."

When it comes to advice for freshman and sophomores to help them understand the significance of student debt, senior management information systems and international business double major Julia Bergeth and sophomore accounting major Jackson Acuff share what they learned to be the most important about student loan debt.

Acuff shared he has learned that student debt affects a lot of different aspects of your life, including your future career.

"Don't ever be late on your payments, that'll screw you over for the rest of your life," Acuff said. "If you're a business major, and when you go to apply for a job and that company sees that you have a bad credit score, they're not going to want to hire you. Student loans impact your ability to get more loans, rent an apartment, buy a house and even get a job."

According to Bergeth, she believes that it is important for students to realize that they will have to live below their means once they graduate.

"You're starting your post-grad life with debt, so don't plan on living the way your parents live as soon as you graduate," Bergeth said. "They were able to afford that lifestyle with a greater amount of income, while you will be having to pay off whatever amount you owe."

Bergeth went on to discuss the importance of paying more than the minimum each month.

"Pay off your student loans as quickly as possible," Bergeth said. "Don't just make the minimum payment each month, pay more than that so you're not paying more interest."

There are resources out there to help students manage their student loans, but, according to Bergeth, doing what you can to start paying them off now will make it easier on yourself in the future.

For more information on student loans and financial aid, contact Harding's Financial Aid Services at finaid@harding.edu.

The end
of a
seasonRACHEL BRACKINS
'16 Graduate

When I pray, I often find myself repeatedly uttering variations of the same phrase:

Thanks for not leaving me in the 11th grade.

Thanks for not leaving me as a college freshman/sophomore/junior/senior.

Thanks for not leaving me as a 23-year-old.

I arrived on campus in 2012 an eager, energetic 18-year-old bundle of self-confidence and tie-dye T-shirts. Family members helped me unload my car and slide my pre-organized plastic crates into place underneath the bed in Cathcart Hall. I spent the majority of the next 10 months approaching life like a kid approaches one of those huge inflatable Velcro walls — at a full sprint with arms wide open, wearing a smile and questionable attire. For me, college was the perfect blend of the familiar aspects of school (homework, tests, group projects) coupled with an abundance of exciting social opportunities to explore.

"After graduation I spent several months grieving the death of college. The process was unintentional at first, but when a name was finally given to my seemingly out-of-place emotions, I accepted the grief with vigor and relief."

- Alumna Rachel Brackins

I arrived in Little Rock in 2016 a tired, slightly overwhelmed 22-year-old bundle of expectation and overworn tie-dye T-shirts. I unpacked my car, bought a mattress and forgot to get a hair dryer for my first day of work. Similar to freshman year, I was introduced to new people, places and responsibilities. This time around, though, I looked up at the Velcro wall with uncertainty and thought about how much energy it would take to fling myself toward it. The familiarity of school was gone, only to be replaced by the staggering realization that never again would I be in such close proximity to thousands of my peers and the handful of people with whom I had grown the most. There's a certain level of understanding among college students that doesn't exist anywhere else in this life.

"The ending of a season will often include some sort of grief."

After graduation I spent several months grieving the death of college. The process was unintentional at first, but when a name was finally given to my seemingly out-of-place emotions, I accepted the grief with vigor and relief. The more honest conversations I had with my close friends, the more I understood how normal my experience was.

No one is immune to change and its accompanying grief. Whether you move to a hip city with all of your best friends, stay in Searcy, get married, stay single, travel overseas or buy a house in your hometown, you will no longer be a college student. Good days will be followed by periods of loneliness and uncertainty as you navigate a new routine. It's sad. You'll probably cry some. If you're anything like me, you'll feel guilty for your inability to approach life with the same eagerness you did when you were 18.

It's OK. It's going to be OK. In fact, it's going to be better than OK. Allow yourself the time to grieve and remember that most of your friends are experiencing the same roller-coaster, so give them a call. And, when you're ready, get a good running start and leap toward that Velcro wall. There are so many wonderful things to experience in this season of life, and I can't wait to see you on this side.

Thanks for not leaving me in the 11th grade.

Thanks for not leaving me as a college freshman/sophomore/junior/senior.

Thanks for not leaving me as a 23-year-old.

Thanks be to God for change.

THE
ELEPHANT
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STUDENT DEBT

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TOTAL STUDENT LOAN DEBT IN THE U.S.

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MILLIONSTUDENTS WITH
COLLEGE
LOANSMILLENNIALS
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1/5
OF SALARIES
ON STUDENT
LOANS13%
INCREASE
IN COST OF
COLLEGE IN THE
LAST 5 YEARS

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Graphic by SAWYER HITE

Navigating job offers after college

HANNAH HITCHCOX
editorial asst.

In classrooms across campus, students spend thousands of dollars each year, learning under distinguished professors and developing the professional tools needed to thrive in their industries. During their final semesters, soon-to-be graduates brush up their resumes and brave the job search — a process that oftentimes raises more questions than answers when it comes to searching for post-graduate opportunities.

According to Cordell Zalenski, a recent Harding accounting graduate, those entering the job market should have a solid idea of their market and know their financial worth beforehand in order to feel confident going into the workforce.

"Do your research and make sure you know how much the people in similar companies or industries get paid, and if that's in the ballpark and feels fair to you," Zalenski said. "Know what you are willing to get paid to do that job and know how much you are going to work."

While researching the company and industry is a critical part of having a satisfactory salary, financial compensation is not the only critical element of the negotiation process. Jessica Counts, a Harding alumna and senior director of financial planning and analysis at Walmart, emphasized the importance of viewing a job offer in the context of location and cost of living.

"If I'm looking across different geographies, it's about being able to think ahead and almost know how that fits

into the budget," Counts said. "Make sure the offer fits for the different places and, a lot of times, it is not as simple as putting two numbers side by side."

Brian Harrington, director of the Center for Professional Excellence, often works alongside job recruiters who expect and anticipate job applicants to negotiate not just their salary, but their terms for employment.

"Negotiation is not all about the money," Harrington said. "You can ask for tuition reimbursement, you could ask for more vacation time, you can ask for a different start date ... If you want a moving expense — there are lots of things you can negotiate."

Overall, professionals of all ages echo the importance of company culture and doing research to ensure prospective companies seek similar values and goals. One of the best ways to understand what a company offers is to ask them directly, according to alumnus Chandler Davis.

"Be very blunt and honest and transparent with the questions you ask when you are meeting and interviewing, whether it is formal or informal," Davis said. "If you know other people in the company that are contacts and you know on a more personal level, ask them. Don't be afraid to be transparent with them."

Harrington said employers typically welcome questions about their culture and brand.

"Do your own research online. What does their brand say about them and then contact people you may know that work at that company," Harrington said. "Or look at glassdoor.com. Their information will describe the culture."

seniority and a new city full of possibilities, my optimism was high. I had all of these opportunities for the taking, and I was confident. Unfortunately, after wading through applications, submitting my polished resume and linking my recently-presented online portfolio, my growing stack of new bills slapped me with a harsh reality.

For most of us, our first job out of college is not the dream job. You take the best you are offered for the experience and to pay your new apartment's rent. There are now utilities, paid time off and health insurance to think about.

Even though no one wants to admit it, this phase is hard. Everyone seems to have it all figured out, posting pictures with new work friends at luncheons and commenting on LinkedIn articles as if they gained three years of experience in three months. It can make you question why you are not as confident in your career or why you did not "find your passion" on the first try.

Do not be
discouragedTORIA LAW
'16 Graduate

A personal friend and public relations mentor once told me that it is important to enjoy the journey. I did not fully understand what he meant until I entered the workforce. As a recent graduate (May 2016), riding the high of

What is even harder to recognize is that most are completely faking it. There is still an unspoken pressure to be a "cool kid," even though you never have to set foot in a school again. This can lead to you feeling even worse about where you are in your career. However, your job is not something you can quickly change like a haircut or a pair of jeans.

Just because you are not exactly where you want to be does not mean there is anything wrong with where you are. There is purpose in each step. Jobs are mundane and repetitive most of the time, but that is where the passion is found. When you love something enough to live it on the unimpressive days, you know you are moving in the right direction.

You will be tired. Some days you will not see the passion in it. You will not want to post it on Instagram. You will wish you could hit snooze and use a chapel skip. Do not be discouraged.



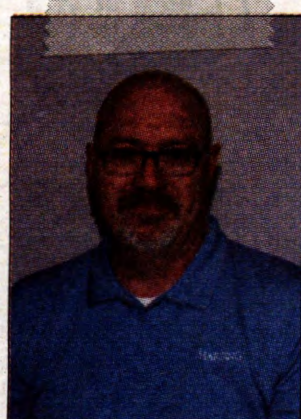
Survival Guide

2C / Friday, April 20, 2018

Advice from the Other Side

Alumni offer thoughts on post-grad life

Things I
would
say now



KEN BISSELL
'84 Graduate

When I stepped onto Harding's campus as a freshman in August 1980, I may have been the greenest, wettest-behind-the-ears new student in the history of the school.

OK, that may be a bit of an exaggeration, but it isn't far from the truth. I grew up in a tiny southern Arkansas town (population 150), and my exposure to anything outside of that community was limited.

Needless to say, my worldview exploded as I sat at the feet of the knowledgeable and faith-filled Harding professors and made friends with people from across the globe. As a journalism major, I served as sports editor on *The Bison* and *Petit Jean* staffs and worked in the school's Sports Information office.

I graduated in 1984, prepared to chase my dream of writing for *Sports Illustrated*. The first stops were sports editor gigs at two small newspapers. But something happened along the way that changed everything: I fell in love and got married. Suddenly, my dream became our dream, and the path to *Sports Illustrated* took a detour to graduate school, and eventually, the world of corporate public relations and marketing.

Children and family responsibilities further solidified the need for career stability. I never made it to *Sports Illustrated*, but I have no regrets. Thirty-four years, four states, five companies and a million air miles later, I am back at Harding as a fund raiser.

If someone had looked into the crystal ball and told the 1984 version of me where I would go and what I would do, I would not have believed them. What lessons would I tell my 23-year-old self if I could go back in time? Here are some things I would say:

Be prepared to pay your dues: Few people start where they want to end up. Hard work, patience and persistence are keys to reaching your goals.

Surround yourself with people who care about you: You may be able to survive, but you will not thrive without friends and family who support and encourage you.

Do not chase money, chase service opportunities: The cliché "money can't buy happiness" is true. Joy comes through service, and every job provides opportunities to serve. The money will come as you advance your career, but recognize that more money comes with a price. Know what price you are willing to pay.

Be a risk taker: Few successful people, regardless of profession, are risk averse. Stretch your boundaries, step outside of your comfort zone.

Live in the moment but invest in your future: Savor the present, but do not spend all you earn. You never know what the future will bring.

Take care of your body and mind: Exercise and eat healthily. Never stop learning.

Find a mentor, be a mentor: Identify someone whom you admire and soak in his or her wisdom. Pay it forward by sharing your learnings with a younger, less experienced version of you.

Commit yourself to excellence, not perfection: Be the best you, every day, but do not fall into the perfection trap. As someone once said, "Slow and perfect is the enemy of fast and good enough."

Remember that God is ever-present, even in the darkest places: The road you take typically is straight, level and joy-filled, but there will be deep valleys along the way. Strengthen your faith when things go well, and rely on your faith when you face struggles.

For the Harding class of 2018, the adventure begins when you step off the Benson Auditorium stage with your diploma in hand. Remember this quote from Dr. Seuss' wonderful book "Oh The Places You'll Go": "You're off to great places! Today is your day! Your mountain is waiting, So get on your way!"

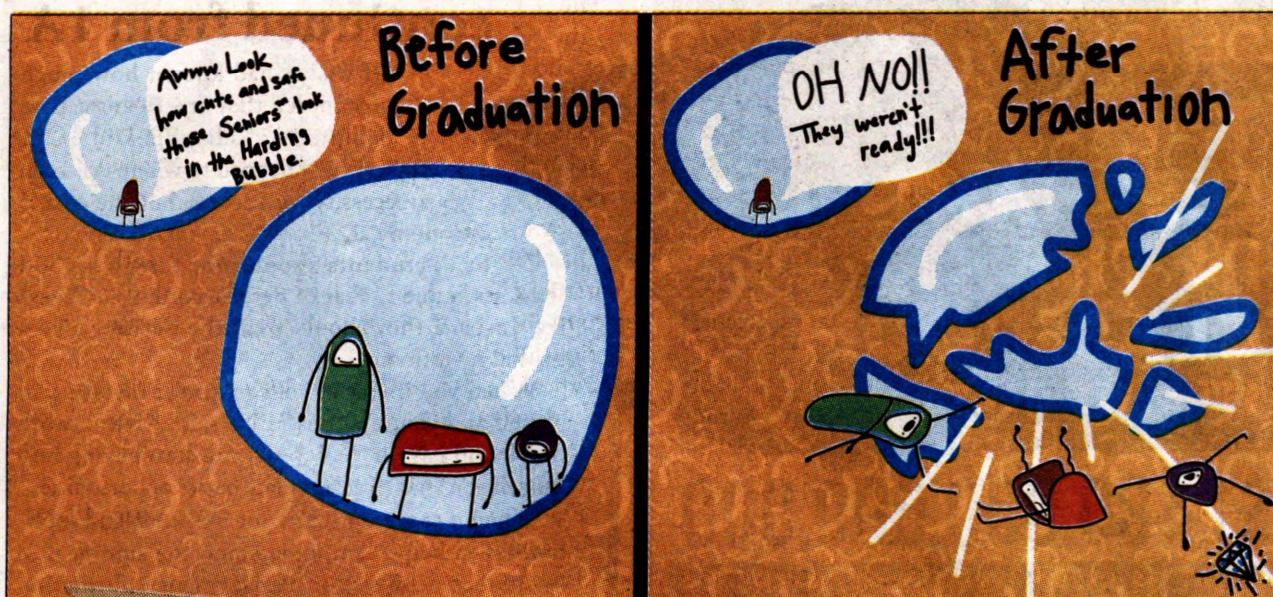


Illustration by ALUMNA JEWELYA COFFEY, '15 Graduate



MAEGHEN CARTER
'15 Graduate

You're currently being propelled. Surprise. You feel like you're independently flying and making your own path, but soon that gust is gone before you realize how much you relied on it. At least, that's what I experienced.

Our whole lives are mapped in front of us in the measurements of milestones and achievements. I'll be the first to say, that isn't necessarily a bad concept. Both provide the comfort of structure and are often celebrated. I loved and craved the structure, pushing for something and knowing exactly what that something was. I hit every checkbox there was without realizing I was doing it, because that's what college is designed to do. And when I hit those marks, I was propelled.

When I succeeded in class, I heard, "Awesome! You're going to do big things." When I got my dream internship, it was "Fantastic! You're going to impress them." When I got academic awards: "Amazing! We'll all work for you someday!" When I got a job before graduation, people said, "Wow! You're going to be so successful!"

And you know what, it felt great; it's supposed to. Your friends, family, professors — whoever — want to support and encourage you. But as I got older, those remarks became scarier. I was being propelled further and further into the sky and I was starting to realize how high I was. I felt like I absolutely could not fall.

Now, there are fewer milestones. I got the diploma, the

Propelled

job, the accolades and all of a sudden, I didn't realize what I was striving for anymore. There was no clear checkpoint for this next, major chapter in my life, and all I knew was that I was expected to continue soaring into the sky with no idea how I was going to stay in the air. I was flying free and flying blind.

I began constantly looking for affirmation in work to ensure I was doing things right and living up to the expectations I thought had been placed on me. I fell into the ever-expected comparison game on Instagram and felt myself participating. I needed people to think I was high in the sky, loving my job and doing well in my social life. It got harder when the reality hit of crying in the bathroom at work because I was exhausted and I messed up. It got harder when I realized I didn't love the job I had been striving for and wasn't even sure if I was in the right field.

I wish I had a, "here's the secret tip to success" sentence for you, but I don't. You're going to have a hard time when you leave school. And so is everyone else. We all experience different kinds of propelling and we all feel the same heart-drop moment of fear when it's gone. You have to learn to create your own wind and stay in the air and it's going to take a while. Create your own milestones and celebrate personal achievements. The scariest part: realize they aren't what you thought they'd be.

It's finding your "people" in your new town, it's buying your own car, it's working your way out of a scary situation, it's your first solo vacation, it's your first interview at another company when you realize it's time to move on ... it's whatever you want it to be.

So keep being propelled. Get as high in the sky as you can. And begin to brace for impact, because it's going to be terrifying when you're free flying. But you can soar, whatever your definition of soaring may be.

Prioritizing Friendships

MELISSA HITE
'16 Graduate

I didn't have much trouble making and maintaining friendships in college. The structure of a university — especially one where most people live on campus — forces people together. Without even trying to, I spent nearly all of my time with friends: in class, in chapel, at *Midnight Oil*, at *The Bison* office for 3 a.m. deadline crashes. I didn't have to plan my social life or work to keep it healthy; if anything, I needed to plan in time for myself, away from friends.

Two years post-grad, I'm realizing what a luxury it was to be in a place where friendship happened so effortlessly. I still have a few incidental relationships. I'm lucky enough to be extremely close with my coworkers, and I have a great roommate. But for the most part, I only see the people I make plans to see.

Here's the thing: it took me about a year and a half to understand that shift in my social order. I spent a lot of time being lonely because I was waiting for people to make plans with me. It seems obvious — but I wish someone had told me before I graduated that I needed to work to make and maintain friendships.

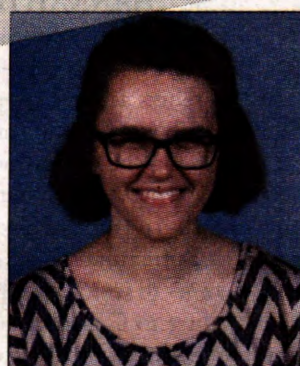
I don't want to scare you. Friendships after college are harder, definitely — but they're also richer, more

beautiful, more intentional. I don't hang out with people because I ran into them at *Midnight Oil*; I hang out with them because I've made spending time with them a priority.

Of course, even two years out, I haven't learned to manage this perfectly. There are people I love dearly that I don't see or even talk to very often. It's one thing to love someone; it's another thing to actively prioritize them. As I'm sure several of my friends can tell you, I'm still learning.

But the ones I'm getting right — the friendships I'm investing in and working on — are some of the most rewarding relationships of my life so far. There's something beautiful about driving half an hour once or twice a week to see people you love, or calling an out-of-state friend once a week. There's something beautiful about choosing people and being chosen in return.

So here are my two cents, for what they're worth: cherish this time of effortless friendships, but get ready to prioritize the ones you care about. Like any good thing, a solid friendship is hard work — but it's worth working for.



Graduation is not a crisis

JOHN PHILIP BAKER
'14 Graduate

There are several personal crises we might anticipate in post-grad life. For one, a crisis of accomplishment. That is, we might not achieve our goals on our own timetable. Then there's the crisis of community — that of shifting from a densely packed campus, saturated with social opportunities (and social imperatives), to a world where you must make your own connections. Finally, there's a crisis of maturity. As we face mounting

responsibilities — taxes, utilities, rent, car payments, healthcare, meetings, professional development and so on — we might find ourselves emotionally unequipped to handle them like the grown-up adults we're meant to be.

But really, these aren't crises. They are merely challenges. When we call any one of them a crisis, we imply that most people should have resolved such issues by the time they graduate. We imply that, if you haven't, you are lacking some fundamental control over your own life. You are

not, as it were, an adult.

This implication reveals a deep contradiction between the cultural definition of adult — a word which we wield in dozens of useless, contradictory and downright dangerous ways — and the structure of everyday life.

To think that struggling with achievement, socialization or responsibility means you are not ready for adult life is to get the process backwards. The struggle is, in and of itself, the experience of adulthood. The so-called crises of post-grad life are difficult, to be

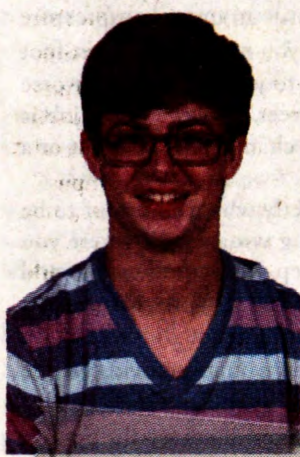
sure, but none of them are insuperable — and none of them makes post-grad life any less wonderful.

If our cultural intuitions about life were true, graduation would be a transition between two untenable extremes: a hedonistic cycle of Netflix binges and social functions, then a slave-like obedience to productivity that, at best, sounds boring or, at worst, sounds hellish. Both pictures are caricatures of the real thing. Unless your college life actually resembles the first, you probably shouldn't

be expecting the second.

Here's the truth I'd have you know about life after college: it's the same, mostly, in that life is always a multifaceted, complex, inscrutable mix of joy and banality and suffering and celebration. Only, life after college is a little more challenging, a little more rewarding.

You already know that college is far more complicated, and far more worthwhile, than the cartoonish way it is sometimes described. Don't expect any less from life beyond campus.





SUSANA LEZCANO
'15 Graduate

Attending college in Arkansas was not something I planned, but an opportunity that interrupted a class I didn't like, back in my senior year of high school, when I learned about the Walton International Scholarship Program.

For four years, Harding showered me with experiences beyond the academics that I wouldn't have if I had stayed in Panama savoring the comfort of my grandma's tamales — classmates from diverse corners of the world, joining a social club, road trips throughout America's heartland and spring break business missions in Ukraine — that shaped me into who I am today.

Returning home with a foreign diploma was huge. However, in a market as small as Panama — barely four million people — who you know is just as important as what you know. Although I traveled home for Christmas and summer breaks, I was a stranger to my peers, so after graduation, I found myself thrown out to a world with no stylebooks, few relevant contacts and no one who cared if I copy edited an award-winning student newspaper, because student publications are not a thing in my bit of the tropics. This, I painfully learned when someone referred to The Bison as "a pamphlet" during one of my first job interviews in the country's largest communication holding. (Yes, I clapped back. Yes, I got the job).

'Learn to say no'

In spite of my rocky readapting process, I have been fortunate enough to work in places where Harding's academics and values are prized, but that hasn't always been the case. Yet, life out there has led me to colorful places and treasured lessons:

1. Early in your career, you will feel the need to pay your dues. Clocking overtime and accepting extra duties may seem the way to build a robust resume, but overdoing it can lead to burnout.
2. Learn to say "no" as an act of self-care.
3. Just being competent, hardworking and enthusiastic will not magically push you ahead, so you need to advocate for yourself and take ownership of your successes when it is rightful to do so.
4. Speak up for yourself, or someone else if needed. Speak up when you have a solution. Speak up before trouble looms (doing it when it is too late will look as if you are making up excuses).
5. Find a mentor and pay it forward. This is particularly valuable among women.
6. Pick your fights. Live today, fight later.
7. Becoming too comfortable in a job could mean it is time to move on.

In the 11 years since my graduation, I've sat with the self-proclaimed king of an indigenous community deep in Panama's rainforest, exchanged jokes with one of Central America's wealthiest men and gotten schooled by a burly, albeit kind quay crane operator.

Just so you know, my old AP Stylebook still holds the paperclips just where Dr. Shock told us to put them, and now I'm teaching my 7-year-old to properly cut and parry like Robin Miller taught me.

A Letter to the Class of 2018



CASEY STRINGER
'16 Graduate

"So, how does it feel to be a college graduate?" This was the first question I was asked by my mom as I walked out of the Benson Auditorium on Dec. 16, 2016, and I'll never forget it. The honor of being the first in my family to gain that title was weighty, but I was proud of my accomplishment. Still, the only answer I could offer her was, "I don't really know."

I've always thought it was a fitting response. That day was exciting, but it also came with a great deal of anxiety. I didn't know what was to come in the so-called "real world." I didn't have any plans, and the future felt like an empty void. Then, with the blink of an eye, I found myself in a new city, trying to get on my feet with a new job and a new graduate school program. Things seemed to have settled down for me.

Fourteen months, five jobs, four moves and one school transfer later, I've landed in a completely different city as a youth minister and a grad student at Lipscomb. It's been a blur. I feel like I've just found land after a year at sea, and I never want to see another body of water. And yet, this period of transition has been a remarkable time of learning, growth and blessing.

Post-grad life is tumultuous. The transition, financial stress and career search can be overwhelming. However, there's something about this phase of life that can provide you with profound joy if you allow it. So, here are a few things I would go back and tell myself if I could:

First, don't compare yourself with other graduates. It may seem like all your peers have landed remarkable jobs and started families, but don't fall into the trap of jealousy. It's crucial to remember your occupation and relationship status do not define you. You are already enough. You are already loved by a God who cares deeply for you. And while these facts might not pay the bills, they'll help you fight through dull days at an awful job or lonely nights in a new place.

Second, go outside! Do something! Force yourself to meet other people, especially those with different perspectives. New friendships can be awkward, but they will help you see and understand the world in an entirely new way. Welcome these opportunities, because they can better your life immeasurably. It can be incredibly easy to lay on your couch in a dark room and never get up. Don't let yourself. Explore your town, socialize and enjoy your new life!

Third, the shape of your faith will change. God uses times of transition to reveal himself in tremendous ways. Try to be open to new ideas and spiritual experiences, even if it's uncomfortable. God is not stagnant and neither is faith. Accept the change that comes with growth.

In the end, post-grad life is what you allow it to be. You can hold on tight and just try to survive, or you can face uncertainty head-on. Look your existential dread straight in the eye and embrace it. Find a path that works for you. Fight for your faith, whatever shape it takes. And above all, never forget that while your profession can give your life meaning, the simple things matter more. Good coffee, good food and good people can be the heart of a remarkably fulfilling life.

'They hired someone else'

FALLYN STIEGLITZ
'15 Graduate

After graduating from college, it felt like a weight was lifted off my shoulders. I no longer had to write papers, complete projects or pull all-nighters to study for tests. Little did I know I had a larger weight taking its place — finding a job.

I knew finding a position in my field would be difficult, but I just didn't realize how difficult. I went several months after graduation unemployed even though I applied to at least 10 jobs every day. Eventually, I had to suck it up and become a waitress and then a pharmacy technician at Walgreens just to pay off my student loans.

Those days were a struggle. I had to deal with customers I didn't like, doing a job I didn't enjoy. I was frustrated. My patience for trying to find a job in graphic design was running thin. I would complain to friends, family and co-workers about how unhappy I was. My personality was becoming a burden to those who were doing their absolute best to support me and build up my confidence.

During this time, I did have a few interviews, but none went anywhere. With my patience and confidence shot, I gave up trying to obtain any position before I even walked in the door.

This went on for several months before I completely exhausted myself. I walked out of Walgreens after my shift one night and just handed it over to God. There was no ounce of my being that wanted to carry the burden of finding

a job anymore. I didn't feel instantly better. It still took me a couple of days and a lot of reminding myself that it was in God's hands before I began to feel any better.

Soon enough, an interview came my way, and it was for a company that I was really interested in. I walked in that office scared and excited, but I expressed my deep desire to work there and gave it my all. I felt confident and more capable of getting a job in my field. Not to mention just a tiny bit like I nailed that interview.

The thing is, I didn't nail it. They hired someone else. I still had to be patient and wait, but God was slowly building me back up.

Instead of getting the job, I was offered an internship for a local machinery company and learned a lot. My confidence in myself and my abilities was restored, and it looked as though handing over my burdens and being patient was paying off.

Two months later, I heard back from the place that didn't hire me. I went in for another interview and was offered the position by the end of the week.

Life after college is hard, and trying to do it by yourself can be even harder. Yet with a lot of patience and some help from God, you can make it.



Post-Graduation Resources

The Barnabas Project

Alumni mentorship program which connects young professionals with more experienced alumni in order to grow professionally and spiritually while maintaining close personal contact with the broader Harding community.

Generation HU

Generation HU encourages graduates of the past 10 years to maintain involvement in the Harding community through networking, giving and service opportunities.

Lifetime Newspaper Subscription

Alumni can purchase a lifetime subscription to The Bison newspaper for \$10. To subscribe, contact the Student Publications Office at (501) - 279 - 4139.

Harding Magazine

The Harding Magazine is sent to students three times a year upon enrollment. The magazine is designed to keep students and alumni up to date on campus and alumni news.

Giving Opportunities

Upon graduation, alumni are able to give back to Harding through donations to scholarship funds, joining the President's council or dedicating a plaque in the First Ladies Garden to a friend or loved one.

Keeping up with the herd

Staying connected to Harding after graduation

DELILAH POPE
head copy editor

In a few weeks, hundreds of Harding seniors will cross the stage of the Benson Auditorium and step from undergraduate to graduate life. This transition comes with new terrain, but according to Liz Howell, vice president of alumni and parent relations, the Harding community remains constant.

Howell has worked with Harding alumni since 1999 and said her office works to provide connections for alumni across various cities through social media, mentorship, receptions and other events.

"The mission statement is to inform people of things that are going on at Harding, of opportunities to get involved, of opportunities to connect, and most importantly to find a church home, and to find a job," Howell said. "Part of our strategic plan is connecting alumni with graduates to help them transition from being a Harding student to a Harding graduate and to a successful Christian servant in the world."

May 2014 alumna Sarah Pope served as director of Generation HU until June 2017, a program which connects alumni of the past 10 years to Harding's broader alumni network. Pope entered Harding as a freshman in fall 2011 and said that though she graduated after only three years, she prioritized campus involvement during her abbreviated Harding career. Pope

said her undergraduate involvement set the pace for her later work as an alumni liaison.

"When you go out and get involved in the community when you're in college, I think it really pushes you out of your box, and it helps you to do that same thing after you graduate," Pope said.

When Pope took on the position of Generation HU director, she said there was no specific agenda for the program besides immediately engaging young alumni in the Harding community that exists outside the boundaries of the campus.

"When you go out and get involved in the community when you're in college, I think it really pushes you out of your box, and it helps you to do that same thing after you graduate."

- Sarah Pope
'14 Graduate

Pope said that in her time as director, she organized baseball games, dinners and other events to give recent graduates a space to create and maintain relationships with other alumni.

In addition to these events, Pope also created the Barnabas Project, an alumni mentorship initiative which connects recent graduates to more experienced alumni for professional and spiritual growth.

Now, Pope lives and works in

Huntsville, Alabama, and experiences alumni life from the other side. Though her orientation has switched, Pope said she still sees the need for community, and especially sees the need to give back to the campus through outreach and recruitment.

"Since I was in the fundraising office, I see what Harding needs and what's really important for it," Pope said. "I would say giving back as a whole in many different ways is one of the most important things for me."

While Pope and Howell both discussed the need to support Harding monetarily, both stressed the ways in which Harding continues to give to students once they have graduated.

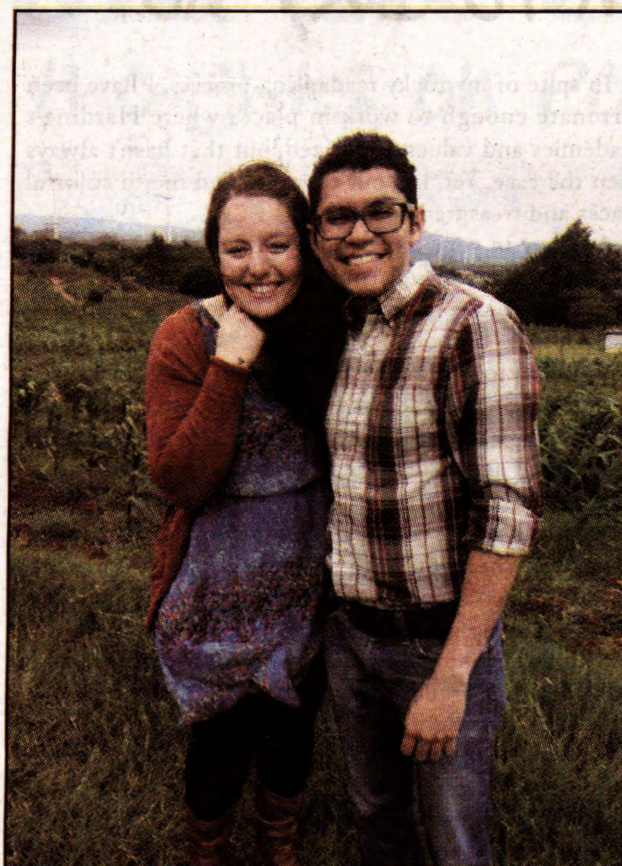
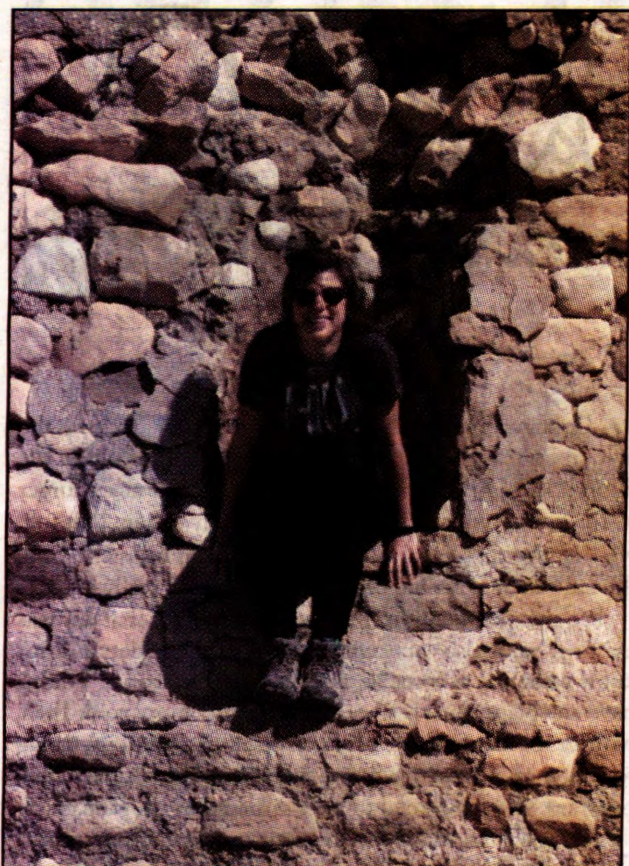
"I always tell people being part of the Harding family is such a blessing because there are deep roots here," Howell said. "When people return for homecoming and Spring Sing they receive the memories, but every time, they say it's the friendships — because they are rooted in Christ — that make the difference. I'm talking lifelong friends from the moment they left campus."

Howell and Pope both stressed the importance of remaining open to relationships and communication with Harding after graduating, particularly online.

To learn more about how to stay connected to Harding as an alum, follow @HardingAlumni on Twitter and request approval to join the Harding University Alumni group on Facebook.



Find what you love: Alumni teach abroad



Photos courtesy of BRITTANY MOUNTFORD, LISETTE PRATO DE MEJIA AND ERIN RAIMONDI

(Left) Alumni Brittany Mountford, (middle) Lisette Prato de Mejia and (right) Erin Raimondi pose in the countries they now call their homes. Mountford, Prato de Mejia and Raimondi found their passions serving as teachers abroad.

NORA JOHNSON
asst. copy editor

After graduating in December 2017, alumna Erin Raimondi pursued a career that surprised many around her. Though she graduated with a degree in public relations and a minor in Bible and missions, she moved across the world to work as an English teacher at a university in China in late February of 2018.

"I actually came to Harding as an education major, but then I switched because I was like, 'I don't want to be in the classroom my entire life,' which is hilarious because I'm in the classroom now," Raimondi said.

Like many other alumni, Raimondi found herself on a somewhat unexpected path after graduation. Raimondi said that, though she initially felt guilty choosing a career that did not fit the traditional route of a public relations graduate, her experiences at Harding prepared her to work abroad as a teacher.

"I spent a lot of money on something that I realized I didn't love," Raimondi said. "But, in all of that, it all played out perfectly because if I didn't do public relations, I wouldn't be passionate about the things I'm passionate about now."

Alumna Brittany Mountford also found her passion working as a teacher abroad. Mountford graduated from Harding in 2011 with a degree in psychology. In 2013, Mountford said she developed a strong desire to go to the Middle East and began the process of applying to work

at a school in Erbil, Iraqi Kurdistan. She moved to Iraqi Kurdistan in 2017 and now works as a humanities teacher.

"Even though I was not an education major, my current job requires me to do a lot of my own research to prepare for class," Mountford said. "We have very limited resources, so a lot of the responsibility of the curriculum falls on me."

Though she teaches humanities, Mountford said she has been able to utilize the lessons she learned as a psychology major in her classroom.

"Psychology is a research-based major, and the tools I learned during the process of pursuing my degree have been relevant across a broad range of disciplines," Mountford said. "I... learned a lot about improvising and problem-solving in various counseling courses and other psychology classes that has helped me adapt to an environment where things regularly change or don't go the way you expect them to."

Alumna Lisette Prato de Mejia graduated from Harding in 2013 with a degree in early childhood education and again in 2014 with a master's in reading education. In 2015, one week after getting married, she moved to her husband Hector's home country of Honduras. Lisette Prato de Mejia said the move abroad was a natural fit for the pair.

"Growing up as a missionary kid in Venezuela, I always knew I wanted to live in some part of Latin America as an adult," Lisette Prato de Mejia said. "It was also a great opportunity to get to know more of Hector's family and culture."

In 2016, Lisette Prato de Mejia received her training to

be an ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher and spent the year teaching English in Honduras. Today, both she and her husband work as regional consultants for a curriculum provider of bilingual Christian education. Their jobs involve traveling throughout their region of Honduras to train educators in their organization's curriculum. Lisette Prato de Mejia said during her trainings, she often includes sessions that focus on teaching English as a second language.

"I have discovered that, even though we live in a Spanish-speaking country, people that speak English have better opportunities in their careers and are more likely to be hired for a position than someone with the same qualifications that does not speak English," Lisette Prato de Mejia said. "It is sad to see how many people with degrees are not able to find jobs due to this."

Though she and her husband both grew up in Latin America, Lisette Prato de Mejia said moving abroad still involved challenges. To anyone interested in pursuing a career abroad after graduation, she suggested preparing by visiting the country first, spiritually preparing and then developing meaningful relationships in the community.

"Go into it knowing that you will experience culture shock and that it will be okay," Lisette Prato de Mejia said. "Also take into account that you may not realize you are in culture shock until those closest to you point it out. The best thing to do is find things you love about the people and the country that surrounds you and focus more on that than the frustrating things."

Around the world and back again

International alumni share challenges of returning home

ERIN SLOMERS
student writer

With graduation right around the corner, many anxious seniors are wondering what will happen after May 5. Where to live, if they will have a job, and how to leave Harding behind. For many students, graduation means going home. For some, home is on the other side of the world.

2015 alumnus Tingyu Liu said that, while he was excited to graduate, it was difficult to move home to China and leave Harding.

"I was having a hard time leaving," Liu said. "I walked around campus and took pictures. I went to the student center, the caf and every restaurant I liked in Searcy."

Life after college can be difficult, but also provide opportunities for growth, according to Liu.

"There is an old Chinese saying, 'It is

when you are using what you learned from books that you wish you had read more books than you have,'" Liu said. "I would suggest thinking over what your goal is and then make plans to go after it."

Mariana Lopez, a 2013 graphic design graduate from Mexico City, said making the transition from Harding to home can be scary, but to remember that God is always present.

"It was hard to realize that my Harding experience was over. It was hard to figure out what was coming next," Lopez said. "I felt I was stuck in the past, and I was so anxious about the future that I couldn't focus on the today. But after a couple of months I embraced the present, I prayed every day for motivation and remembered that God answers at the right time and at the right moment."

Keeping up with friends after college is

not easy, especially from far away, but Lopez said social media helps keep everyone connected.

"It hasn't been hard to keep up with my friends because social media helps a lot to connect with them at anytime and anywhere," Lopez said. "I've even visited some friends in their home country. It's great to catch up in person (rather than just through the screen of your phone. I feel friendships at Harding are truly special because of the bonds and memories you create while being a student."

Lopez also offered a bit of advice to those getting ready to graduate.

"One — enjoy every day. Everyone who graduated will tell you that, but it's true," Lopez said. "And two — plan your goodbyes. Graduation day is (going to) be a crazy day. Make a list of the people who you'd like to thank."



Searching for post-graduation housing options

CAYLEIGH THOMAS
student writer

When 2015 alumna Alexis Crowe took a job at the Little Rock Family magazine, she had about three weeks to find an apartment — from the time she accepted the job until she graduated.

Crowe said she focused on finding an apartment at the lowest end of her budget. She found and visited an apartment in an area of Little Rock she knew nothing about.

"I visited the apartment in the daytime and everything about the apartment and the area seemed nice," Crowe said. "The apartment was in my budget, and I signed the lease that day."

Crowe said when she moved in, she noticed people hanging out and playing music in the parking lot at night. She said she was one of the only residents who had a problem with the noise. In addition to this, Crowe said men in the parking lot would often call and yell names at her as she walked into her apartment at night.

"What I learned from living in that apartment is everyone, especially post-graduates, should tour the apartment in the

day and then check back on the area at night to see what the area is like at both times of day," Crowe said.

JoAnne Ford, rental and office manager for Physical Resources, said she has moved more than 20 times throughout her life. Because of this, she said she had several suggestions for graduates preparing to move and begin the hunt for housing.

"Not only do I know about rentals for my job, I know about moving from being in a military family," Ford said.

Ford suggested that graduates make a budget and expect their monthly rent to be at least one-third of their allotment. She also said graduates should rely on family and friends who know about good areas of town to live in, as well as people in different areas of the country who can do the same. She added that students should not choose an apartment "sight unseen" before signing a lease.

Ford said websites like Zillow, Trulia and Padmapper are good for keeping housing within a budget, one or two bedroom places and other criteria.

According to Ford, in order to get a lease, graduates should gather their pay stubs and get their credit score. Ford said Equifax and Experian allow users to access their credit

scores twice a year for free, so new graduates can approach housing options with ease.

When Raneisha Stassin, December 2017 graduate, landed her first internship in San Francisco, she contacted the company for housing resources.

"I would discuss this up front with the company I'm interning or working for so I can make sure I have all my options laid out for me in advance," Stassin said. "It's difficult trying to figure everything out on your own, so it's important to use all your resources."

Stassin said she spoke with professors in the Department of Communication, who helped connect her with anyone they knew who could help her find housing. Stassin advises graduates looking for housing in a big city to plan, use all their resources and research in advance. Stassin suggests contacting universities or churches in the city if there are no other available contacts.

"Finding housing in a big city is not an easy task, so look for support," Stassin said. "You may end up surprised at who may step up and help you out when you need it, and you may be even more surprised by what you're able to find with just a bit of research."